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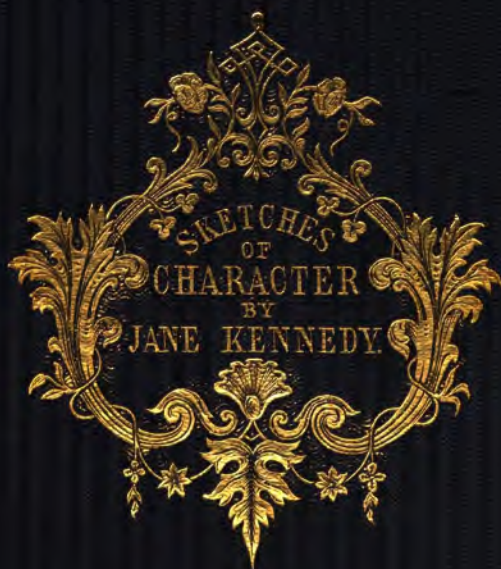
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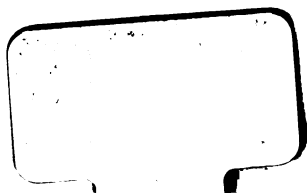
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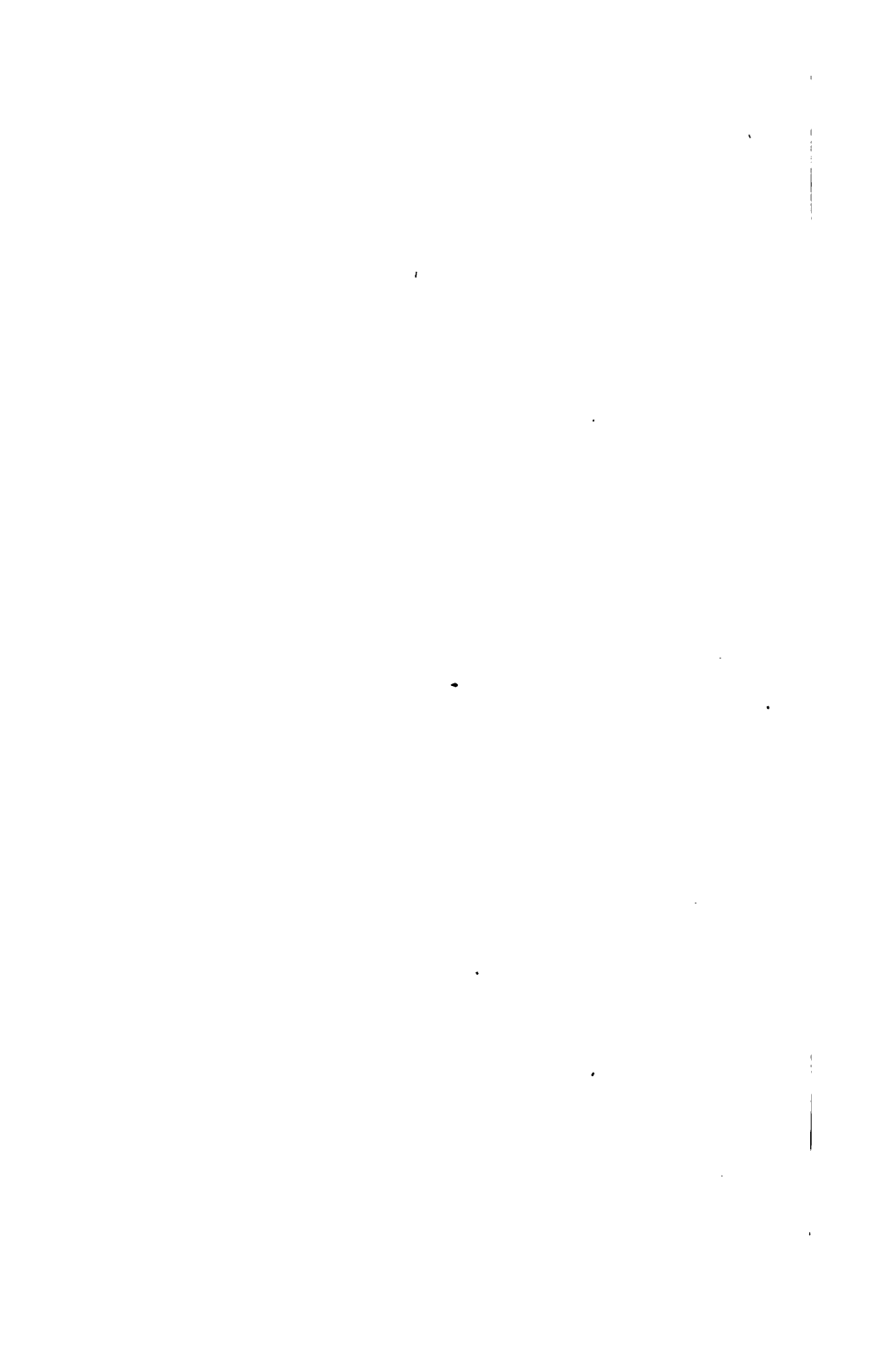




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SKETCHES OF CHARACTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.—JULIAN.



SKETCHES OF CHARACTER.

JULIAN;

OR,

REMINISCENCES OF AFFECTION.

BY

JANE KENNEDY.

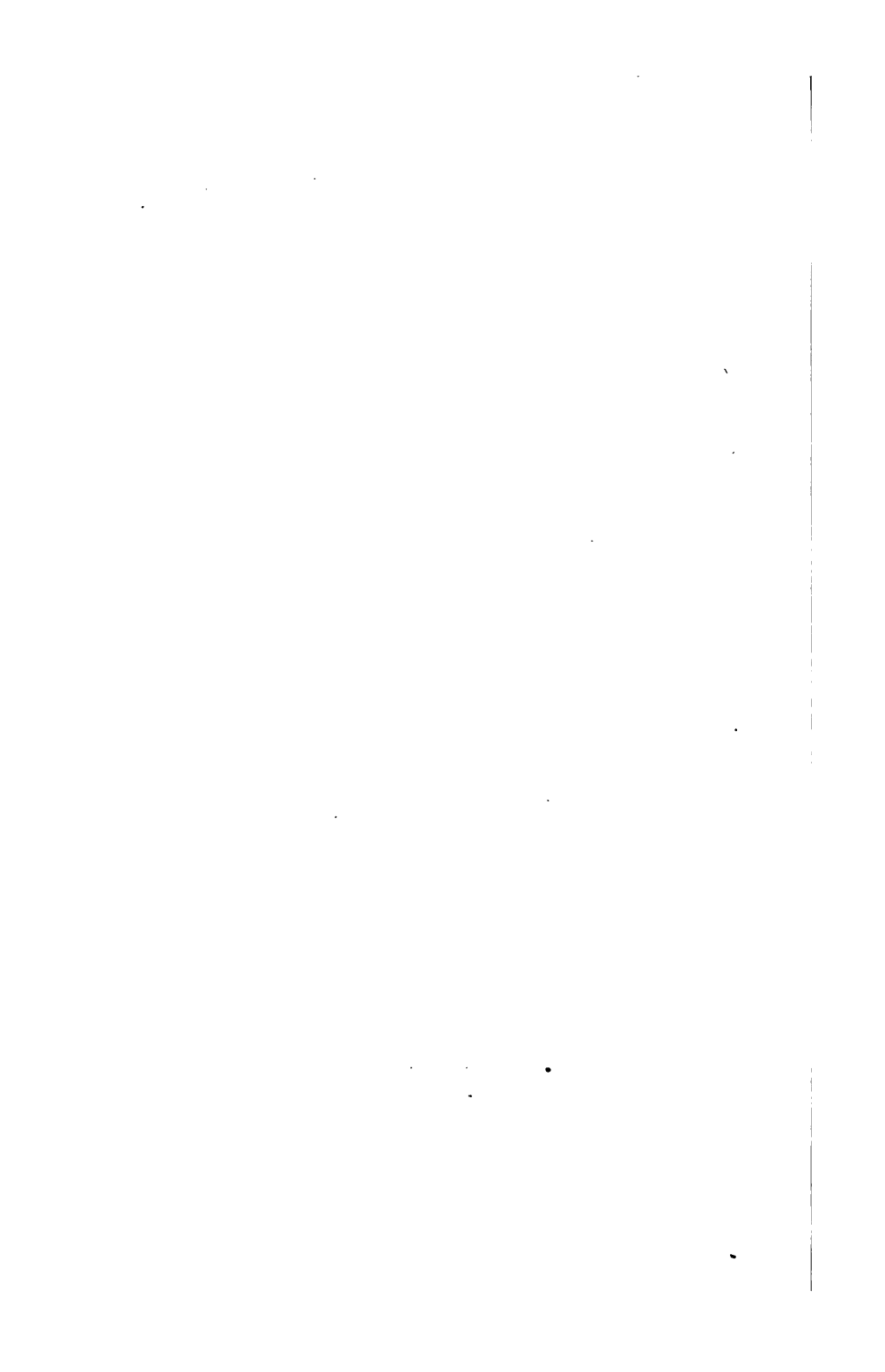
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# JULIAN;

OR,

## REMINISCENCES OF AFFECTION.

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### CHAPTER I.

AGNES, my dear! what have you been thinking about the last ten minutes? You have been looking into empty space as intently as if you were contemplating a whole world of beings, and were trying to learn all about them."

"Indeed you have guessed quite rightly, dearest mother mine!—for I have been watching the existence, from the cradle, to its final extinction, of a child of imagination; and I have thought of a great many things in the

last quarter of an hour. Shall I tell you what the *principle* of it is? Do you recollect, mamma, how dear grandpapa used to amuse us, by beginning his explanations and stories by 'The principle of it is this'?"

"Yes, dear Agnes ; and I like much to think and talk of all he used to do and say. When a loved parent has preceded us to the World of Spirits, there is a great charm in recollecting the minor details of the time we passed together,—it keeps up the memory of those happy hours ; and we at last begin to look upon the separation as if one of us had merely taken up a residence of a few short years at a distance from the other, and we were to be reunited at the end of that period, with our love for each other as fresh as ever, and with the delightful prospect that we shall live on together—without any diminution of happiness. You shall, however, reserve the relation of your day-dream till your return. Put on your bonnet, dear ; and take George up the cliffs with you. The afternoon will probably be wet, so you had better profit by

this pleasant sunshine; and then we may possibly have a snug little chat together the rest of the day. It does not often happen; for we have so many friendly droppers in, who kindly come to inquire after me, that it is seldom you and I are alone. This afternoon, I fancy, everybody will be off to see the launch, if there be anything the least resembling fine weather."

"Shall George take his books with him up the hill, mamma?"

"Certainly not. Do not forget that many a village proverb, or nursery saw, has often more truth in it than the cleverest remarks of the witty; and that nothing can be truer than that 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.' You little Utilitarian! even you ought to be satisfied that no time is lost which is passed in re-invigorating the frame for the labours of the mind; and I think, besides, a walk gives one so many opportunities for studying the works of Creation, that the heart is gaining improvement at every step; and it is a great pleasure to examine



the wonderful beauties of even a daisy or a blade of grass, and to find that they are worthy the skill of the Hand which created the heavens and the earth. Run, trot away!"

And Agnes did trot away, beckoning to her brother to come and join her. He was at home for the Harrow holidays, and was always ready to escort his sister. Of a simple and affectionate disposition, he never imagined it was not "the thing" to be seen strolling over the cliffs, or on the beach, or popping in and out of the cottages, with his sister. So he called his dog, "Dolphy, Dolphy;" and away they all bounded together.

George Danesfield had the good fortune, in the lottery of school eras, to have drawn the enviable prize of being in Dr. Vaughan's own house; and he was so much impressed by the beauty of the golden thread of religion, on which all the pearls of knowledge were strung, in the precepts and examples of that eminent scholar and Christian, that, without being aware of it himself, he imbibed the same spirit.

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Whilst the young people were gone to meet the fresh breezes, and enjoy the view which presented itself, whichever way the eye turned, from that pretty cliff, their mother was left alone. But Mrs. Danesfield was not one to whom solitude was an annoyance. With a lively manner, and a countenance beaming with intellect, when in society, it seemed as if conversation were so entirely her element, that she must be dull when she could neither speak, nor be spoken to. Often have her friends falsely imagined, when oppressed by nervous weakness, that it was because she had no one to entertain her, that she appeared downcast, and was silent. It was far from being the case. The little world within her was always as busy as the world without; and she had a never-failing source of recreation in the abundance of her ideas. She married young; and her life had been one of more joy and sorrow than usually falls to the lot of womankind. Left a widow, after a happy marriage of ten years, she had neither given her hand nor her heart away a second

time. Mr. Danesfield had fully appreciated the blessing of her affection, and devotion to his comfort and welfare; while she cherished the remembrance of his manly confidence, his open, kind, even manner, and, above all, of his sweet temper, combined with sound sense, far too lovingly to risk the chance of meeting with the reverse by giving him a successor. In her latter years she had become a great invalid: a fall from a carriage, which at the time seemed of little consequence, had caused such severe internal injuries, that pain and debility became at last part and parcel of herself, so completely that she had forgotten even the feeling of ease and health. It was no matter of annoyance to her, who had learnt to receive her daily bread from her Heavenly Father, as well as to pray for it, to see others buoyant in spirit, and elastic in the free use of their limbs,—well convinced that had such a state been better for her, it would have been allotted. She knew not what was to be the issue of her illness; but she never wavered in her faith. Instead of pining and

worrying herself about the fate of her two children, in the event of her death, she lived on, from day to day, in the full assurance, that He who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," would do for them that which alone was for their good; and that if we were not to boast of to-morrow, neither were we to be careful overmuch concerning it, for "the morrow would take thought for the things of itself." The Bible was indeed to her the staff of life; and whilst she could feel that He who made her, and counted even the hairs of her head, kept equally an account of every pang He sent, and of the manner in which she bore it, she committed herself, her children, her cares, her joys, her sorrows to His entire keeping.

Agnes and George were growing up in this atmosphere of religion; though it was scarcely ever the subject of controversy or discussion. It flowed as readily through their whole existence, as the blood through their veins; and without ever being told to do so, they made their Father in heaven the con-

fidant of every thought and wish. At night they offered up their feeling of grief for what they had done amiss, and of gratitude for what they had enjoyed during the day, with a touching simplicity, that showed how truly they were blest in the injunction that graciously permitted children should be brought to Him, who on earth folded them in His arms, with such a warmth of love. George was overheard saying to his sister one day, "I often thank God for that most comforting Psalm, the 139th."

When Agnes and George came in, they had luncheon; and then he went to ride to the neighbouring port, where the launch was to take place. Agnes took her work, and sat by her mother's sofa.

"Now, mamma, for what you call my 'day-dream.' I have been thinking, I should like very much to earn some money. I know that you give me more than most girls have; still it does not suffice for all my wants and wishes. I have so many friends not so well off as myself, and there are such immense

numbers of calls for money in these active days, when churches are to be built, hospitals to be kept up, houses of refuge to be erected, that I cannot bear always to say 'No;' especially when I know that, if each person that is asked were to give only sixpence, the sum required would undoubtedly be made up. I want so many more sixpences than I have; and I should have so much pleasure in giving them, if I had earned them. But there are so few things young ladies can do! Dear mamma, think, and think till you have found something for me to do." While thus expressing herself, she patted her mother's cheek, leant forward and stroked Mrs. Danesfield's bands of grey hair, kissed her on her forehead, and tried, in every coaxing way, to gain her mother's full attention to her request.

"Agnes, you darling puss! you are a strange young creature: I like your wish, and I certainly will help to find something for you to do. We had better consult Julian, when he comes to-morrow."

"Julian! Mamma, why when once he has

begun to sing his favourite airs to you, you will forget all about me, and my poor little wish!"

"That's very unfair of you towards your cousin, Agnes. You know he is so thoroughly good-natured, that he would not even think of singing, if you expressed a wish for his time and his advice."

"I did not mean that, mamma; but he knows so well how happy it makes you to hear him sing, that it is his very good-nature that will be in my way."

"Let us make a bargain then. When you have finished your practising to-day, take the key out of the piano; and then when Julian sits down to sing, he will ask for it,—and that will remind us that we have some other occupation for him."

Julian was Mrs. Danesfield's nephew, and her darling of darlings. Excellent mother as she was, she did not love her own children more dearly than she did her sister's son; and well did he deserve her love. He was not a model young man,—he could get into

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youthful scrapes, and out of them, as often as any of his companions, and could vote his law-books "bores," with the same warmth that they did; but he was so unselfish, so affectionate, so merry, so considerate in all his ways and words of the feelings and wishes of others, that his life seemed to be an unbroken chain of benevolent deeds of larger and smaller import. He was tall, dark, with an eye that seemed to read one's inmost thoughts; and his voice had something winning, whether he sang or merely spoke. His thirst for information was unbounded; and as his memory was one of the best, he discoursed of books, authors, countries, and opinions, with much more accuracy and less self-sufficiency than young men ten or twelve years older than himself would do. If he were not perfect at the time we introduce him to our readers, he gave great promise to become so; while Mrs. Danesfield had forestalled futurity, and already considered him such.

What did Agnes think of him? That if all other young men were not like him, they



ought to be so; and that she should not like George half so much as she did, if, when he came to man's estate, he did not resemble him as much as possible.

In short, "dear Julian" had every chance of being as spoilt and disagreeable as idols generally are. Fortunately, the extenuating circumstances with him, and the crown of all his good qualities, was, that he took all the affection his aunt and cousin lavished on him as the spontaneous growth of their own kindly feelings; and thought they would have loved any nephew or cousin, had others existed, in the same way,—the more especially if that nephew or cousin loved them as he did. He was totally without conceit or affectation. He lived in London; but he came down every Saturday, to spend a quiet Sunday with the Danesfields, and return to his studies and his town companions on Monday,—a better and happier man for every Sabbath he passed amongst those dear ones.

They all rejoiced together in the sound of church bells; and they were sure to have

a service as worthy of their Maker as it is possible for imperfect, fallen, sinful man to make. The sublime, reverent, heart-stirring, and heart-elevating prayers of the Church of England, were read by one whose delight it was to worship God in His temple, with all the poor of his parish, and to explain afterwards briefly, but eloquently and feelingly, any passages of the Lessons of the day that might pass unheeded, or might not be understood by his congregation. The music was good; for Mr. Travers held it a positive duty to make the best use of God's gifts: therefore, as the capability of harmony is certainly one of them, he had every one taught, who was to sing in his church, that the congregation should be edified, instead of being forced by horrid jingle to feel the evil passions of anger, or mockery of what is sacred, to arise within them.

The Danesfields went to church twice. Agnes and Julian then visited the sick and the infirm of the village; trying to make them forget their sorrow that they could not

be at church, by repeating to them all that their pastor had said by way of consolation or edification.

Mrs. Danesfield had taken a great fancy to the Jewish custom of having a large pot on the fire, filled the day before, so as to make an excellent soup. Meat, bread, vegetables, all were seethed together; and, after the morning service, the children came with their jugs or basons, and fetched the dinners for their sick grandparents, or any invalid member of their family. Julian and Agnes walked together afterwards; and in the evening they sang together. Both being clever musicians, it was a great treat to Mrs. Danesfield to hear those sacred songs, which, had it been permitted, she would have listened to so gladly in the church.

There never was a happier family party. George could not sing: so, when he was at home, his mother deputed him to be her chaplain, when he read a chapter from the Bible, without annotations or commentations, followed  
-ers, before they all parted; after which

they retired to their respective rooms, full of love to each other, and to all the world.

Agnes was no heroine of a novel. She was simply a loveable young girl, not remarkable for her beauty; and in a ball-room she would not have been noticed. It was better for her happiness, that she was not run after by all the young dandies, who think they confer a great honour on a girl, when they condescend to throw the halo of their admiration around her. Nor was she feared as a rival by those of her own sex, whose sole delight is in exciting that admiration. When she went to a ball, she was so absorbed in the pleasure of dancing, or listening to the music, or meeting with her friends, that it never once entered her head to ask her glass, on her return, how she had been looking that night,—nor herself, if she had made any conquests;—yet no one ever left a ball-room with a fuller sensation of having passed a thoroughly happy evening than Agnes Danesfield. She was not too much fatigued either, because she was obliged to be home at a reasonable hour,

on her mother's account. She always rose the next day quite refreshed, and ready to re-commence her usual avocations. No ball in anticipation, however, gave her half the number of quickened pulsations, as did the prospect of Julian's arrival the next day, when he was to decide so momentous a question for her. She thought herself very unsisterly; because, when George returned from the launch, she did not feel by any means the same interest in his details, as when he related any, even the most simple, of his school feats, at another time.

George had fortunately a most sensible mother. She gave way to no woman's fears, whenever he was out of sight; but allowed him to fish, ride, shoot, and absent himself the greatest part of the day, without imagining that he must necessarily be drowned or killed. He had not chosen his profession; and Julian was to be consulted on that matter also.

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## CHAPTER II.

AT length the hour did arrive, and Julian's gentle rap at the door was soon recognised. Always occupied in doing what was most beneficial or agreeable to others, his very rap at the door showed how fearful he was of startling his aunt by any sudden noise; and he walked quietly up stairs from the same impulse. How happy Mrs. Danesfield was to receive him! "Dear Julian, I always feel inclined to mark Saturday in my Almanac with a bright red line, because it brings you to me. I think, if you did not come, I should take a penknife, and cut the Saturday out altogether that week; and then the blank in my book would be a homage to the blank in my heart!"

Whereupon saucy Master Julian began warbling some pretty air from the last opera; and having kissed his aunt, turned round to welcome Agnes with both hands. His was no rough shake, that seems to make the bruising and hurting of the fingers the proof of cordiality; but an affectionate pressure, that said, "Dear coz, how glad I am to be with you!" Suddenly, recollecting that he had not come alone, but had left a friend by whom he had been accompanied waiting at the door, he exclaimed, "By all that's hospitable! I've left Henry Mounthill outside. Dearest aunt, allow me to bring him in." Reading her consent in her smiling countenance, he darted down stairs, and came almost as speedily back with Mr. Mounthill.

Poor Agnes! She saw in a moment that there was no hope of discussing her scheme; and that the plot of the key, with all the hundred ways she had revolved—each being, in her fancy, better than its predecessor—for carrying on her arguments, were all useless; and that she must bear the burden of her

ungratified wish another week, for she foresaw that her mother would ask Mr. Mounthill to be Julian's companion during the whole of his visit. She had thus unconsciously taken a lesson in self-denial and self-control. She felt it not; and though to her it will not be revealed till the secrets of all hearts, the mysteries and hidden ways of Providence are discovered, she gained more in the education of her mind during that moment, than she would have done in the whole week had nothing thwarted her.

Mr. Mounthill was a most prepossessing young man. His manner and address were most gentlemanly; and though small in stature, he was so graceful and well formed, that he was only remarkable by the pleasure his society afforded. Everybody liked Mounthill, and Mounthill liked everybody. He was always ready for everything; and no one could discern, in his voice or words, that the very proposition made was not just the very one he preferred to any other in the world. In truth, I am not quite sure that he discovered



it himself: for it was such a habit with him to agree with whatever seemed to be the prevailing sentiment of the party with whom he was, that it had at last become second nature; although, had he ever been guilty of reflecting, he would frequently have found that, during the twenty-four hours of the day, he had "liked above all things" measures or amusements that were each diametrically opposed to the other.

The discussion being out of the question, Agnes bethought her she must find something for the gentlemen to do during the afternoon. They could not sit by her mother's side all the time, and converse with her. The joy of seeing Julian had rather wearied her nervous system; and she wished for a few hours' quiet, before she could ask him the hundred questions about the books he was reading, the people he had seen, the progress he had made in his studies, that she invariably put to him every Saturday. She could never tire in the interest she felt in all that concerned him; and she was almost inclined to dislike Mr.

Mounthill, and consider his visits an intrusion, since she could not cross-examine her darling Julian. But then the thought that he was Julian's friend, and that Julian liked to have him with him, made it a sin in her eyes to wish, for the millionth part of an instant, that he were not at Grey Cottage.

The afternoon was so lovely—the sea so inviting—that a row and a sail, with the variety of a little fishing, was suggested. All jumped up with alacrity to be off; and a delightful little expedition it was. Agnes, Julian, and Mounthill sang merry little airs in French, Italian, English, and German. They caught a great number of fish, sailed round the bay several times, and returned home to finish the evening in talking and laughing. More singing was proposed; and Agnes said nothing, when asked by Julian, “Where is the key of the piano, dear coz?” but immediately brought it to him.

When they went to their rooms that night, the gentlemanly Mounthill, who was as boisterous and jovial with male companions, as he was

demure while before the softer sex, slapped Julian on the back, exclaiming, "Well, old Ju, I understand now why you look forward to the Saturdays with so much pleasure; that is, if all Saturdays were as fine and agreeable as this. But do tell me, old fellow, how do you manage when it rains?"

"As you would not like to do, I suspect. Agnes and I take out our pencils, draw and read alternately, whilst my aunt listens and knits. Then again we diversify our amusements with music; and, I can assure you, I like it a great deal better than smoking, drinking, or talking about horses and ballet-dancers, which are the only resources you possess to drive away *ennui*. Now, good night: I feel as giddy as if I were still tossing on the waves, and I wish to sleep off the uncomfortable feeling."

Did Mounthill enjoy the way Sunday was spent at Grey Cottage? I am bound to believe it, since he said he did, and when he declared he never had passed a Sunday in 'life so profitably, I believe he spoke the

truth; for having made up his mind that Sunday must be usually a dull day, he was surprised to find how speedily he came to the close of it this time. And let us give Mr. Travers his meed of praise—he made religion so attractive by his cheerful manner, and the evidence of his own delight in it, that it was impossible not to feel that the mind and heart were breathing a purifying element in his presence.

Mr. Travers was all that a clergyman should be. His life out of the pulpit was the exemplification of his doctrines in the pulpit. He never wearied in “going about doing good.” He was never known to neglect an opportunity of raising the mind of the person with whom he was speaking to the source of every right thought, wish, and feeling. Mr. Travers did not exist for himself. He had but one object in view: that was, to occupy till his Master should come,—not to lose one moment of discoursing of that Master’s wondrous love, and endeavour in every way to lead others to love Him as he did; and it was all said and

done in so gentle and fervent a manner, that no one ever felt himself "talked at," nor reprimanded. None could help wishing that they were as fully imbued with piety as he was,—he seemed so truly happy in the service in which he was so unremittingly engaged. Even Mounthill could not refrain from echoing a verse he had heard in church, and said to himself often that day, "It cannot be denied that Mr. Travers has chosen the good part, and that it never will be taken away from him." And yet it never once entered into his head, to think of the possibility of seeking in London for a Mr. Travers, to help him to pass all his Sabbaths advantageously, as this one had been passed.

On Monday, Julian and Mounthill returned to their town life: Mounthill unsettled by the novelty of the last few days; and Julian, in his calm way, merely thinking what a pleasant thing it was to have an aunt and cousin at hand, to shake the dust off his mind that his musty law-books would leave on it during the next week!

When they were gone, Agnes burst out laughing, — “Well, mamma, was ever anything so absurd? I have taken such a nice little journey to Cloudland. On Friday, I already pictured myself, to myself, as beginning my new and industrious life the moment Julian was gone; and, actually, like ‘Tony Lumpkin,’ I am exactly where I set off so many days ago,—not one step have I taken in the land of reality.”

“I am very much pleased, my little girl,” said Mrs. Danesfield, “to see how well you have borne your disappointment. Believe me, if you had showered guineas into my lap, earned by your own talent, it would not have given me half the happiness I feel at this moment. You are old enough to know, and to have observed, dear Agnes, that a woman has much cause for forbearance during the whole of her life; and if ‘he that ruleth his own spirit be a greater conqueror than he that taketh a city,’—and Solomon says it,—you may remember, it is equally true that the woman who has learnt to bear with a thousand vexing annoy-

ances of daily life, without being ruffled, has attained the grand secret of domestic comfort. I do not mean that she should be indifferent or apathetic, for that is particularly aggravating to those with whom we live; but if she can bear to see her dress torn, just as her toilette was completed,—and take without a frown, or angry word, or look, the destruction of any work, whether of the pencil or needle,—she is fitted to adorn any and every position in which she may be placed. How do you like Mr. Mounthill, my love?"

"Indeed, mamma, I am afraid he would not be very much flattered, if he were to hear me say. I really could not afford to spoil my own enjoyment in Julian's visit by thinking about him at all. Now he is gone, I will give him my consideration; and in a day or two, I shall perhaps be able to tell you whether I like him or not: just now I have not time for discussing his merits. I must go and feed my chickens, and look after my roses: flowers require such great care and attention by the sea-side. I wonder, however,

what Mr. Mounthill thinks of himself? I am almost afraid he is so perfect in his own eyes, that whatever I may say or think of him will never equal what he thinks of himself. So I will just tell you what, dearest mother,—the best thing I can do is not to think about him at all. It was really naughty of Julian to say he should bring him again next Saturday: we are so snug, without any addition to our family party.”

Exit Miss Danesfield, humming a merry air, and courtesying to her mamma as she walked backwards out of the room, as if she were leaving the presence of royalty.

Mrs. Danesfield continued her knitting, smiling within herself, to think how light-hearted her darling Agnes was, though so accomplished, well-informed, and fond of all that was good and great in men and books. She was as happy as a child in attending to her poultry-yard and flower-garden. How truly glad was this fond mother, that she alone knew what suffering and debility were!



## CHAPTER III.

\*\*\*\*\*  
SIR CHARLES MOUNTHILL  
\*\*\*\*\*  
S lived in rather an old-fashioned  
part of London: yet, having once  
placed himself very comfortably  
in May Fair, he had no idea of rising up to  
follow the crowd to Belgravia; so he remained  
where he was, receiving and diffusing happi-  
ness.

Sir Charles was one of the most charming  
of men. It was impossible for any one to be  
in his society without being carried away by  
his indefinable charm of manner. He was,  
likewise, the handsomest man of his day; and  
it is on record, that when he returned, on  
leave, from Spain, in the earlier part of his  
diplomatic career, he was so great an object  
of attraction, that the first time he appeared

at Almacks, the beautiful and noble of the land stood up on the benches to see him enter the room. He had written a short pamphlet on the siege of Badajos, for the benefit of the desolate survivors of the siege; and his little work contributed £2000. to his charitable funds, and made him *pro tem.* the darling of the ladies.

He married in Spain. Lady Mounthill was so fully sensible of the merits of her treasure, that she loved him more and more every day; whilst he was the kindest of husbands. In his diplomatic career he went to Switzerland; and one of his chief topics of conversation, ever after, was the primitive footing on which the "boys and girls of society, young and old," used to be.

He would often tell how that, in his time, (he did not know, he said, how it was in these topsy-turvied days,) every creature had his or her Sunday coterie. From three and four years old, each kept to his or her own until death,—that is, the women did: the young men, unless they entangled themselves in the

web of matrimony, would change sometimes, — but one old gentleman remained constant during fifty years. The society only admitted those of the same age: therefore two sisters, unless twins, could not be of it; and one friend of his acquaintance counted as many as seven different sets. The young ladies were attended from their parties by a maid, with a lantern; and if one were grown up, and beaux were admitted to her coterie by one of her friends having married, and thus given them a chaperone, the parents inquired particularly who escorted her home. If the same gentleman were frequently in attendance, it augured much; and he was henceforth to be bowed off, or his arm accepted, according to his greater or less eligibility to become a suitable husband. One custom was very singular, — a series of balls took place in the theatre, called *Redoutes*; and at these balls the programme was always the same. A Waltz, a Ländler, a Hopser, a Langhaus, and an Allemande followed in succession; and five times were they repeated in the same order. When

the gentlemen called to wish the ladies a happy new year, they made engagements with them for each ball; and if they were very much smitten, they obtained four or five dances from the adored one. Of course, Dame Neighbour was busy remarking who danced with whom, and how often. It was a matter of great discomfiture to the parties concerned, when the young people grew tired of each other before the season was over, and were still obliged to go round and round together, lest their inconstancy should become the theme of gossip. What would our grand ladies say, when told that ten pounds a year was considered a fair allowance for a girl's toilette, and fifteen pounds exceedingly liberal? A cotton print or fresh gingham gown was the morning attire, and an inexpensive muslin the evening's dress. It certainly did appear rather uncouth, when, in the interim of the dances, a huge wet carpet was dragged over the floor to allay the dust; and not a little arbitrary, in this land of liberty, when the chief of the police took out his watch at ten o'clock,

and every violin was silenced. Democracy is, however, invariably a greater tyrant than monarchy. Sir Charles laughed till he cried sometimes, when he thought of the fat ugly old women, dressed in men's clothes, that formed part of the orchestra in his time.

After Sir Charles came to settle in England, his chief delight was in forwarding all kinds of improvements, especially among young people. He was ever giving prizes for one thing and another,—in the country, for skill in archery,—in town, for any or every thing. Having a little Swiss-ishness in his disposition, his boundless hospitality was often displayed in having *sets*, sometimes all literary people. It was, however, remarkable, that when they were at his house, they forgot all rivalry, and were not afraid to speak, lest some other more clever than themselves might set them down as donkeys; but, full of good humour, and perfectly at their ease, they were as brilliant as possible, and every species of wit sparkled, and was as profuse as the champagne.

Rosa was her father's coadjutrix in all that

was pleasant, kind, and clever. If the conversation never flagged, it was because the subjects that filled her mind were inexhaustible; and hour after hour flew rapidly, in the interchange of ideas with her. She had been engaged to be married; but just a few short weeks before the wedding was to have taken place, Mr. Chalmers fell from his horse, and was killed on the spot.

Was Rosa witty, gay, and chatty still? Yes! she was,—for she knew she was the delight of her fond parents; and as soon as she could rally from the shock, she appeared as in days of yore. No one saw the tears she shed in such torrents when alone. Like gold purified in the furnace, her bereavement seemed to make her a thousand times more attractive than when life was tinged with rose-colour. She existed only for the happiness of her father and mother: her touching devotion to them made her look, in the midst of her own affliction, like a star that shineth in darkness.

The day Julian Delancy (for it is time it

should be known that our hero has a surname) and Henry Mounthill returned from Grey Cottage, Sir Charles had one of his juvenile parties. The parents of the young people had received hospitality the week before; and they always permitted their daughters to accept the invitations to the Mount-hills' house,—a privilege accorded to none but the much-loved and popular owners of that house. To diversify his fêtes, he sometimes gave a grand *squeeze*,—in these days called an “At home.” At other times he would have a merry ball. But he was so wedded to early hours, that his dinner parties ended at eleven, his routs at twelve, his balls at one; and those, amongst the lovers of dissipation, who liked it, went to other balls and parties after his. The more sober ones went home.

This day he had made up his mind for impromptu poetry. Having prepared all his materials before the arrival of his young guests, when the tea had been handed round, he took them into the adjoining room, and

showed them three prizes he had fixed upon for the three best sets of lines produced amongst them. The subjects were written on scraps of paper; and each guest drew one from a basket. It was quite amusing to see the earnestness with which all began their work. Many, however, amongst the twenty-four assembled, searched in vain,—no rhymes would come; and blank verse was even more pertinacious in its refusal to obey the summons. It was very hard to give it up altogether; for all were so anxious to do their best for their dear Sir Charles, that they tried till the case was too desperate to admit of remedy.

Three fragments of poetry were however produced; and the three prizes would have been at once awarded to the acknowledged writers, had not Sir Charles perceived, in spite of the feigned cramped hand, that Rosa had given way to happy reminiscences; and he was too much overcome himself, in reading her lines, to bring notice upon her. Rosa had drawn the paper on which was



written — "Pleasure expressed on receiving a long expected Letter."

"WHAT joy it is to hear from thee once more!  
Thou hast all power, my bliss or woe to make:  
My bark of life was stranded on the shore;  
My laden heart with sorrow seem'd to break.

The sun, I thought, would never shine again;  
With leaden wings my hours all pass'd away:  
I gazed upon the dreary, boundless main,  
And heeded not if it were night or day.

Thy sweet words came! they thrill'd me with delight;  
As lightnings flash, my sorrows did depart:  
Gladness sprung forth, sparkling like jewels bright;  
The merry fays danced gaily in my heart.

Didst thou believe in half that I avow,  
Those magic lines thou 'dst never cease to trace:  
My friends forsooth are all astonish'd now,  
To see my happy, brightly beaming face.

Then do not let so long a while pass by,  
Ere that from thee I have another strain:  
Whilst reading thee, the moments swiftly fly;  
When thou art silent, time is fraught with pain!"

The next verses that were produced should have perhaps been read before these; but as Sir Charles drew them, he read them. They were — "A young Lady piqued by the delay she experienced in her Intended's attention."

"I sigh and sigh again,—  
With me 'tis no pretence;  
There is no greater pain  
Than that of sad suspense.

When words of love are sweet,  
They're dear as miser's treasure:  
If heart with heart can meet,  
Life has no truer pleasure.

But when the one grows cold,  
Is listless and supine;  
Before the change is told,  
The other 'gins to pine.

It waits and waits in vain,—  
No tokens are received;  
Each day the faithless swain  
Is less and less believed.

The sea both ebbs and flows,  
And so will woman's fears:  
Her love still stronger grows;  
She strives to hide her tears.

Whilst man unheeding smiles,  
And trifles hours away;  
Engaged by others' wiles,  
He counts it only play.

I fear it must be said,  
Where Love sends forth his dart,  
It passes through man's head,  
Transfixes woman's heart!"

“Bravo! bravo!” called out Sir Charles; and then there was such a clapping of hands, and so much glee, that it might have deafened every one within hearing.

All sitting round the table were too much amused to feel annoyed by the clamour; and the most ill-humoured could scarce refrain from a smile, when Lady Myra Thornton rose up to receive the prize. She was so unlikely a person to have written those gay, yet sentimental lines. To do her justice, however, she had no vanity about it, and saw as plainly as the rest how much her dumpy little figure, and full round face, were at variance with the expressions of her poetry.

Sir Charles hastily glanced over the third Poem, entitled “True Affection;” and turning with his benevolent smile to Julian, he said, “Mr. Delancy is easily recognised in these sentiments as a near relation of Mrs. Danesfield. Whilst the handsome inkstand he had won was handed to him, his host began,—

"HAST thou e'er met with love like mine ?

'Tis life itself to me ;

It twines, like tendrils of the vine,  
Round ev'ry thought of thee.

Italia's sky is not more bright,—  
No purer are her rills ;  
Her evening has no softer light,—  
No firmer are her hills.

I think on thee when I awake,  
In all my hours of prayer ;  
I form no wish, no project make,  
In which thou hast no share.

In fancy's dream of night or day,  
I see thee by my side :  
This love comes o'er me with such sway,  
'Tis like a mighty tide,

That ever flows,—strong, restless, deep,  
All bounds it does disdain ;  
It makes me smile, it makes me weep,  
Moved by thy joy or pain.


And though on earth love takes its root,  
It will outgrow all time ;  
In spheres of bliss, the lovely fruit  
Will suit the heavenly clime.

The fragrance of the blossom now  
Is sweet as this world's love ;  
But not so sweet as hallow'd vow,  
Renew'd in realms above !

Then let us be each other's guide,  
Through paths of pious lore;  
O'er sorrows wave we'll gently glide,  
And land on true joy's shore!"

After this, the party broke up. Sir Charles and Lady Mounthill, having kissed Rosa with unusual tenderness, the tear still glistening in her eye, took up their candles, and retired to rest.

## CHAPTER IV.

HO did you say, Mr. Delancy,  
 is it, who is to bring Miss  
 Danesfield to town for a few  
 weeks?"

"Mrs. Orville, Sir Charles."

And now let us advert to Mrs. Orville. She was Agnes' grandmamma,—and dearly did Agnes love her; so did every one who knew her. She was born in America; but unlike the exotics of the greenhouse, which degenerate in the climate to which they are newly transplanted, she seemed to expand more and more in loveliness and grace. Of the most even temper, and possessing the kindest of hearts, her gentle, playful spirit was ever actively engaged in affording pleasure: she rejoiced to see people around her

enjoying themselves, and had a twofold relish in the enjoyment she had been so fortunate as to cause; while neither time nor trouble prevented her from using her utmost efforts in every one's behalf. Although she was in the autumn of life, she went into society frequently; and was so much admired, that it was considered quite an honour to have her as a guest. Agnes was to go out into the world with her: she therefore came down to Grey Cottage, to spend ten days with her daughter, before beginning her London campaign. She remained with Mrs. Danesfield whenever Agnes and George went on the water; for the very idea of a boat made her feel indisposed and frightened.

Agnes was very fond of the sea,—she could never have enough of it, according to her opinion; and when not bathing, or strolling on the beach, she was sure to be off in the little boat which bore her name and the Danesfield flag. She looked like Cleopatra, when half reclining under the awning, and enjoying herself.

The old boatman was a prime favourite: his peculiar way of expressing himself, and pronouncing his words, diverted her extremely. He was very patient in repeating over the history of the fish, and recapitulating the names of the different sails: but, notwithstanding all his instruction, she could not recollect her lesson properly; and he was not pleased, when she confounded a billyboy with a sloop, or a hatch-boat with a dandy. One of his amusing remarks was the expression of the displeasure he felt at seeing the regularity with which artists painted the sea,—“I can’t think why them *architects* makes the waves so even and reglar! I never seed two of a size.”

Agnes denied herself the pleasure of hearing from him a narrative of his former days, for she had been told his trade had been that of a smuggler. Fearful of betraying too great an interest in the exciting scenes of his lawless pursuits, she thought it better to appear entirely ignorant of them. He was a queer-looking little man at all times, and was scarcely less so in his Sunday’s best. He



had a coat the tails of which touched the ground, and his hat looked large enough for a man twice his size.

Everything charmed Agnes which related to the shipping interests of her little bay; and she admired greatly a gig which had been made by an old man of eighty, in three months,—he being the sole wright. It was a graceful, well-made thing; and the old gentleman had good reason to be proud of her, the day she was set afloat. How difficult it is to persuade one's self that a vessel is not in fact "a thing of life!"

Can any object be more beautiful than a large ship in full sail, going majestically along the bosom of the ocean? There is something so calm, so noiseless, so powerful in its appearance, it is almost impossible to fancy that it is full of human beings,—too often, alas! employed in drinking, fighting, and making every matter a subject of brawl and strife.

Agnes was not, however, the only inhabitant of this pretty little place, which might have been inferred from the frequent mention of

her name. On the contrary, it was a very populous corner of the earth, and many were the visitors to Grey Cottage. Only few of them, however, possessed any remarkable trait.

One little bustling woman amused the Danesfields very much. She was always on the trot for some errand or other, and generally on a good-natured hunt for some uncommonly cheap article which her friends at a distance desired; whereas, by paying a little more in the town where they lived, they would have found an article of their own choice, in much less time, and without the addition of carriage. It is wonderful what a knack some people have for giving commissions!

This little old lady, who seemed to spend all her strength in the service of others, was what is called a person of acute observation, whom nothing escapes; but, I fear, she had little penetration as to the good qualities of her neighbours. She was always ready with a flippant remark to their disadvantage, and wound up every sentence with, "I never interfere with others." At the same time she

fully proved—if one were as ready to believe her as she was to believe herself—that no one ever did or said what was right, or managed a household, or performed the various duties of wife and mother as she did. Some people took the liberty of differing with her in opinion; but that was a want of judgment beneath her notice. This good little woman measured everything with her own yard measure, and never discovered it was too short. However, Mrs. Derry was by no means disliked: on the contrary, she was so full of fun and laughter, that she was welcome everywhere, and nowhere so much so as at her own fireside.

Besides Mrs. Derry, there was a certain Mrs. Falker, that kept the neighbourhood alive by her malapropisms. She never by any chance recollected a person's name,—was sure to call Mrs. Bird *Mrs. Nightingale*, and Mrs. Peacock *Mrs. Partridge*. And if there were any one person in particular to whom an anecdote should not be repeated, it was to that very person she was sure to relate it,

in all its details; and, quite forgetting whom she was addressing, would earnestly beg Mr. Townsend, when she mentioned some strange story about his wife, to be very, very careful not to whisper a word of it to Mrs. Townsend! Sometimes she took the candid line, and would say, "How do you like the Trotters? Not much. Ah! I thought so,—there is reciprocity in all feelings: they cannot bear you." At another time, she would advise a dear friend not to imagine she escaped censure; for that her faults were just as often canvassed, and made the subject of gossip, as those of anybody else. Then she would ask a young girl, endeavouring to smile, as if she were saying something pleasing, "Why is it you look so much older than you are? At the party I was at last night, we were discussing that point: all expressed a wish to know if you had met with a disappointment in life." And thus she went on making blunders and mischief, till no one could endure her. She was thunderstruck, when she told the neighbours she should probably reside

another year amongst them, that not one expressed the least pleasure at the prospect. They were candid in their turn.

One old gentleman, of a sentimental turn of mind, was very fond of relating his own accounts of Cupid's freaks in his career ; but as he had neither wit nor teeth, his auditors were not much edified.

With Mr. Travers we are already fully acquainted. Besides him, there was a Mr. Sandford, whom Agnes called the King of Ryville. He seemed to know no rest, night nor day, from scheming and acting for the welfare and gratification of all around him. He had built a very large house ; and would have made it as large as his own kind heart, had that been possible. He often had as many as thirty people at a time to visit him ; and as he always chose those to whom sea air and change were necessary, he sighed that he could not have thirty more. His benevolent countenance quite beamed with the warm feelings he ever felt gurgling up, and renewing, like a refreshing stream, within

him. The chosen partner of his home was as active as himself, in scattering generous and kindly deeds amongst their friends and acquaintances.

The dear friends of Agnes' heart, however, we have not yet seen: they were two sisters, whose lovely characters were brightened by the rough handling of much adversity. They had so much depth of feeling, such sterling sense, such sweet and attractive qualities, that, next to her own mother, Agnes loved them more tenderly than any other human beings. The love she had for Julian and George was of a sterner nature. She could weep or laugh with Emma or Mary, according to the passing feeling of the moment,—with them she shared every thought. They had learnt to study each other's countenance so accurately, that, on entering the room, Agnes knew directly if she had to condole with, or congratulate them; and they knew instinctively, by a glance at her face, whether Mrs. Danesfield were in a more or less suffering state.

"Shall we arrange a picnic for next Saturday? It is George's last day; and I am sure Julian and Mr. Mounthill would like to see those splendid nursery-grounds of Mr. Sandford's, and his aviary. We can set off early, so as not to be out late. Mamma would imagine we were catching our deaths, if we were to be out long, this showery weather."

"I have made up my mind to speak to Julian next Saturday, about my pet scheme; and if it bore Mr. Mounthill, why it must bore him. Though I think, Emmy, if I introduced him to you, you would so fascinate him, that he would not even think of what I might be saying. Come, girls, give me your opinion,—Picnic, or no picnic?"

"Picnic by all means! I like nothing better than a country scramble; and we can have such a delightful climb up that steep hill."

"I wonder if Mr. Mounthill will find 'that just what he likes above all things!'"

"Agnes, you do love dearly to laugh at him; or you would not make such a propo-

sition as that of making him over to me. He cannot, I am convinced, make himself agreeable to one girl in the presence of two others; and he will not have a fresh supply of compliments by next Saturday. He makes his whole warfare with our poor hearts to consist in pretty speeches. I have a great mind to say to him, 'You think yourself perfection, Mr. Mounthill!' just to see if he will answer, 'At least, I never was so near it as now,'—or ask him, if he thought my bonnet pretty? to make him repeat, 'I never see a bonnet, when I am dazzled by bright eyes beneath it.'"

"You will just do no such thing, Miss Emmy. You have not that boarding-school Missish way of flirting; and I am only afraid, you will so alarm him by your dignified manner, that he will come and interrupt my important conference with Julian, by way of seeking my protection,—for I am sure that Mr. Mounthill is very easily abashed, and you would freeze him to death by your coldness."

"Capital! capital! Agnes. Just fancy a



young man, who has run the gauntlet of four or five London seasons, being put out by a country Miss like me!"

"Well, I believe it is just such a country Miss like you,—like you especially, darling Emma, I mean,—that would put him out; for I am afraid young men are not much used to hearing or seeing anything from young ladies that have not the aim, covert or open, of making impressions. We are sadly addicted to the love of conquest making."

"I suppose you will see a great deal of the Mounthills, Agnes, when you are in town?"

"Yes, I hope to do so. Sir Charles and Lady Mounthill were very old friends of Mamma. They met abroad, and for years were in the constant habit of seeking each other out, to spend some time together; but the younger ones of the two families have not seen each other since they were quite little children; and I long to be intimate with that dear, sorrowful Rosa Mounthill. Julian talks to me constantly about her; and I sometimes think he is a little smitten. I should be

sorry for that; for I am sure Rosa will never marry."

"Don't be so sure of that, Agnes: we shall see what we shall see. How very fond Mrs. Danesfield is of Mr. Delancy!"

"Mamma always tells me there is a romance connected with her love for Julian, that no one would believe if they read it in a book. She often promises me she will tell me; and then, when I ask her, she blushes, and says, 'Another time, dear child! another time: I do not wish to be agitated just now.'"

"I dare say she was attached to Mr. Delancy—I mean the papa—before she married Mr. Danesfield."

"No: she says that is not the cause of it. Whatever it may be, I am convinced, mamma would hear with much more composure of the flight of every bird in Mr. Sandford's aviary, than of the chipping of one of those little biscuit images Julian has given her; and yet mamma takes a great interest in those pretty creatures."

“How true it is,” said Mary, “that many occurrences in real life are more wonderful and romantic (whether sad or gay) than any to be found in the most exaggerated novel! Mamma related an incident to me this morning, that occurred at Naples, when she was a girl. It greatly excited her curiosity to know the names of the parties concerned; but she said, she never could learn them herself. The nurse who went out walking with her, and her little brothers, was constantly followed in the Chiaja by a monk of the Franciscan Order. She tried to avoid him; but wherever she went, when she turned, she found him behind her. One day he traced her home; and just as she was entering her house, he accosted her in English, (which, of itself, terrified her very much,) and implored, in the most beseeching terms, that she would forgive him. She entreated him to leave her. ‘No, I cannot, I cannot,’ he replied,—‘until I have your pardon, I cannot die in peace. I murder mother!’ She was horror-struck; but suddenly recollecting she

had very good accounts of her mother, in a letter received the day before, she bid him begone, as an impostor. 'It is true, it was not your mother,—it must have been your grandmother!' Anxious to get rid of him, she said, 'I forgive you! Leave me!' Before doing so, he, however, told her that he and others had been hired to assassinate her grandmother; and the dying woman's voice had never ceased ringing in his ears. He had come to Italy in the hopes of finding peace in a monastery; and being one day in the Sistine Chapel, he heard her speaking to the children, when her voice, sweet and gentle as it was, pierced through him. She repeated her forgiveness, and he left her. When she became a little calm, she remembered that her mother had told her, that her grandmother had been the poor cousin of a Marquis, in whose house she resided, with him and his family. The eldest son lost his heart to this dependant but charming cousin, and resolved upon marrying her. But this did not suit the views of the Marquis; so he put his son in

the army, and, as soon as he had accompanied his regiment to the seat of war, he made the young girl marry an old man, for whom she had not the least affection. After a few years, peace was proclaimed ; and the young nobleman, delighted to hear that the old husband had paid the debt of nature, wrote home to say, that he was returning in great glee, and should certainly be united to his fair cousin, whom he had continued to love as much as ever. However, the dreadful father, to assure himself that such should not be the case, had the poor young girl put out of the way ; and this monk had been one of the assassins employed ! The victim's daughter married an officer in the army, whose extravagance reduced his family to poverty. As he had not given his daughters the education of gentlewomen, they were obliged to take inferior stations ; and so it happened that Rachael became the nursery-maid in our house."

"How horrible ! And has Lady Besmond never heard since who this atrocious Marquis was ?"

"No, never!"

"Let us come back to our picnic, and banish this fearful tale from our thoughts."

"How do you know, Agnes, with all your arrangements for taking off Mr. Mounthill's attention, that he and I shall be in the same carriage?"

"For a very good reason,—we shall all be in one."

"How will that be managed?"

"Mamma has a kind of car, made purposely for these occasions. She took the idea from what is called 'a family carriage' in Germany, and had it made to hold twelve. It requires two horses, of course, and does not go with railway speed; but it is light, and well made, and can be easily opened or shut, as we like best. In the boot there are very nice baskets made, with little compartments, for taking our provisions. The cloaks we can put under the seats, if they are in our way. When we have talked the matter over with our respective mammas, we can walk up this afternoon to the Sandfords, and ask them to come with

us. Mr. Sandford will delight in showing us all the beauties of his birds, beasts, and flowers. Julian says Mr. Mounthill is a great botanist; so, for once, I hope he will forget himself, and the effect his smiles and his curls may be making, and give us a chapter on Natural History.

## CHAPTER V.

\*\*\*\*\* SATURDAY arrived, and the picnic took place; but Agnes was not of the party. She had caught cold the day before, and was obliged to remain in her room, the very day she was to have been so very happy, according to her own hopes, with Julian. She neither saw him nor Henry Mounthill. Nor did she know, till a long time after, what an effect that day had on the destiny of Henry Mounthill,—how he had come away from that garden, bearing in his heart of hearts the assurance, that, abundant as were the flowers there, none retained for his memory so sweet a fragrance as the words and looks of Mary Besmond! And much honour did it to the discrimination of that worldly-wise young man, that



he discovered, in those few hours, what a gem of a woman she was! From that moment he determined to become worthy of her. He felt ashamed of the frivolous life he had led. He began to think that Julian was not such an idiot, in the way of true enjoyment, as he had hitherto set him down to be; and for the future, he would seek out more sensible companions, and strive to get some ideas into his empty noddle. He despaired of ever being anything like what she could love and esteem. Still there was a slight tinge of hope which cheered him on; and he resolved that not one hour should be lost before commencing the reformation.

Rosa was extremely happy when she saw this change in her brother. She had long wished for it; for, dear as he was to her, she could not help seeing how very, very different he was from that pattern man, her father. He did not once name Mary Besmond to his sister; but she saw that there was some stimulus to his present mode of life, and she allowed to undertake and pursue his system with-

out a remark, being too much pleased to have it so, to destroy for him the charm of a mystery which worked such wonders in so short a space of time.

Truth to say, there was not so much to be done to effect the metamorphosis as might be expected. If he had done little else, till now, than play the flute delightfully, sing to perfection, ride restive high-bred horses gracefully, frequent balls and operas, read French novels, saunter away much of his time at the clubs, it was because he had never given himself the trouble to reflect that he was a responsible being, who would have to give an account one day of so much time misspent. It could not be said, that he had ever put himself to the least trouble to assist one fellow-creature, whether of his own class or those beneath him.

*Now*, how different it was! As his father gave him a very adequate allowance, and would leave him an abundant fortune, he began to think in what way he should spend his money, instead of abusing the gift as he had formerly

done. It was wonderful how the magic wand of Master Cupid taught him wisdom, but not yet true wisdom! It was only after many visits to Ryville, many exhortations from Mr. Travers, many conversations with Mary Besmond, that he discovered the shallowness, the real evil of his ways, and began earnestly to pray for that wisdom which is from above.

Mary did not, in the least, remark his feelings towards herself, although she was charmed to see the great improvement; for most heartily did she rejoice, at all times, when people of any class or age endeavoured to mount higher and higher in the scale of human beings. "Upwards and onwards!" was her motto; and every action and word of hers was stamped with true nobility of mind. She could not imagine why clever men would waste their literary talents, telling of all that coachmen and porters did. She was not desirous of being initiated in the slang of thieves; and as to those who wrote reprehensible books, making vice winning, and profligacy palatable, she thought they ought to be condemned by the magis-

trates to make a bonfire of all they wrote and published, and to be held up to public scorn, instead of being lauded to the skies for their immortal genius!

Mary herself avoided every work written by any author who was known to make the worse appear the better cause; and she used to allege, that it was no foolish fastidiousness in her, but that, in fact, if ever persuaded to read a book such as gentlemen pretend ladies devour in their boudoirs, but blush to acknowledge in the drawing-room, she assuredly lost a portion of happiness. "A woman's mind," she used to say, "ought to be kept pure as fountain water, and her chief delight ought to be in all that is elevating."

She could not agree with Mounthill, who tried to make her believe that knowledge of evil was necessary, to aid one in avoiding it. It was a sort of excuse for his own past misreadings, and habit of trifling with the serpent. And yet he would have been the last to wish her really to do as he had done; for it is remarkable, that the more a man has stained

his own mind, the more anxious he is that the object of his love should be spotless, and innocent of all guile. I do not allude to low-minded and really wicked men, for I know not what they really like or dislike,—but the general run of the men of the world, who know what it is to do right, but still do wrong. She had not the vulgar idea, that every man who spoke to her must be in love with her; and she was, consequently, not only a much greater object of admiration than she imagined, but it set her so completely at her ease, that she was a thousand times more attractive from all absence of display.

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At length, Mrs. Orville went up to town. She and Agnes were both grieved to leave Mrs. Danesfield alone, although quite aware how little solitude was irksome to her. How often she had wished, when bustling little Mrs. Derry, or the sour Mrs. Falker, came to visit her, that she could refuse to see them,—the one bored her, the other vexed her! Her me-

dical men agreed that nothing could possibly be more prejudicial to her, in her debilitated state, than annoyance or mental shocks; and that every one near her should choose lively, brilliant conversation. Alas! this is among the many things of this world more easily said than done,—so frightfully weak was her nervous system, that she was perpetually thrown back by some unavoidable agitation.

The first time Agnes went out was to a family dinner-party at the Mounthills. She had suggested this to Mrs. Orville,—for she was very desirous of making Rosa her friend, and she felt that if Rosa had many guests, by whom she was called upon to do the honours, although she would not be neglected, yet she should not really have the opportunity of making her acquaintance. It was quite essential to her comfort, during the whole of her stay in London, to have some one more initiated than herself in the multitudinous mysteries of town etiquette. She knew she could depend upon Rosa, who would never be so selfishly employed with her own engagements, as not to

pay attention to her whenever she wanted advice or assistance. However, upon the plan of expecting nothing, and being pleased with any kindness or civility that came in her way, she was not so much at a loss as she feared she might be.

Everything was new to her. Yet she was equally happy in the morning, reading, writing to her mother, and drawing and singing, as she was in the evening, when she accompanied Mrs. Orville to any fashionable party. Mrs. Danesfield's example had taught her that happiness comes from within, and not from without. She was introduced to the family of the Marquis of Colquhoun. Lady Myra Thornton (whom we have seen at the Mounthills) was the third daughter: her two eldest sisters were married,—the two younger not yet “come out.”

Lord Colquhoun had four sons. So that it was a goodly number that was arranged round his table on fête days; for the Thorntons were a very united family,—and they made as many fête days in the year as they could, that they

might meet very often together. When the brothers grew up, they were less frequently at home, as their various engagements and professions made it more difficult to be all at leisure at the same time. Still, "Home, sweet home!" was a watchword with them; and whenever they could, they all flew to it.

Lord de Basset (the eldest son) was in the Guards, and about four and thirty. He was a great ornament to his regiment, and thoroughly the gentleman. During his stay in it, the regiment was more popular than ever; for not only was it distinguished by the numbers of titled men as usual, but the officers were so well conducted, that fathers were anxious that their sons should be in it.

Lord de Basset was mild and grave; and though not sternly nor exaggeratedly just, yet all his subordinates esteemed him, and knew they were sure of a kind word, or an invitation to his hospitable table, if they did not transgress the laws of decorum or discipline. If he met any in the streets, and he bowed more cordially than was his wont, they felt



immediately he wished to give a public recognition to merit, and proudly they returned to their homes that day. "De Basset smiled when he passed me,"—"De Basset shook me by the hand in the park," always meant I have been faithful to my duties, and it was shown to all my acquaintances that I am in favour.

Lord de Basset knew that "example goes before precept," and evinced this conviction in every way he could. What was wanted to complete the beauty of his character? Love! He had never felt the tender passion. Fortunately for him, he was much nearer that blessed state of bewilderment than he himself was aware. When once in for it, who so desperate as my Lord de Basset?

Lord Leopold Thornton was the madcap of the family; and a precious pickle he was. Then there was no kind of tomfoolery which he was not up to; and whenever he did anything very strange, the Viennese (for he was attached to the Embassy at Vienna) used to shrug their shoulders, and say, as a clever Frenchman used

to do, *C'est une originalite Angloise de plus*. I verily believe, he was more wild in his pranks on this account. He delighted in taking in the stiff Austrians, and tried to make them believe that all Englishmen did as he did, only on the Continent they did not all like to appear in their natural character, and were much tamer than they were in England: the contrary being the fact, for there is no licence they do not give themselves when away from their countrymen's observation.

My Lord Leopold chose one day to shoot at the trees in the public walks; and when told he must pay a fine for the damage he had done, he asked the superintendent of police to make a bargain with him, to let him pay so much per week, with full liberty to perpetrate any mischief he fancied. At this time, however, he was more subdued than he ever had been; for he had been saddened by a most fearful tragedy, consisting of a series of duels which had taken place in a neighbouring garrison town. From his very cradle, he had been taught to look upon a duel as one of the most

complicated crimes man can commit. He had written home a full account of it to Lord Colquhoun.

Lord Robert was intended for the Church. He studied at Cambridge. Just at this time he happened to be in town ; when he went frequently to see Mrs. Orville, and to converse with Agnes. The Thorntons had all learnt that politeness is essential as a characteristic of a gentleman ; and though they did not lounge away their afternoons in foolish idle visiting, they deemed it a positive duty to call upon those ladies who invited them to their houses, or were friends of their family,—and did not imagine they ought to be satisfied, if they condescended to eat their dinners and grace their evening parties.

How often, when Agnes was chatting with Lord Robert Thornton, did she wish to advise him to go to Ryville, and learn from Mr. Travers what a clergyman ought to be ! But why it was, you, dear reader, may better divine than she could, that she always found his name refuse to come to her lips. And

yet "Travers" was not a more unpronounceable name than "Thornton." Still, she could only talk about him at home, or in the cottages of the poor. It seemed to her as if his name were out of place anywhere else,—something only to be mentioned in her prayers, when, I am afraid, she oftener praised God for making him so very perfect, than she asked that anything amiss in him might be amended. Could there be anything to alter for the better in Mr. Travers? Yet this fervent feeling—this touching affection—she never once imagined could be called by any other name. Alas! soon the truth was revealed to her.

Lord Lewis Thornton was at Woolwich; and happy indeed was his mother, that he should only be old enough to go there now, when the Lieutenant-Governor was a man so fitted for the care of future heroes,—so unflinching in his impartiality, and so determined that the tyrannical ways so long manifested amongst the youths should have an entire end. Lady Colquhoun laid her head on her pillow in the sweet conviction, that all that could be done

by human means would be done, to make her darling Benjamin a Christian, a gentleman, and a soldier ; and she begged earnestly indeed for a blessing on these means.

It was in the following letter Lord Leopold gave his father a narrative of that woful tragedy to which we have alluded :—

“ MY DEAREST FATHER,

“This will not be one of my uproarious letters. I am not this day able to give you an account of the brilliant fêtes, balls, the tournaments, the country excursions we have had ; for I am sick beyond expression of the narration Mackintosh has just given me of a series of duels, which have taken place in a garrison town not far from this. If I were writing to any one but yourself, I should undoubtedly say all that I ever heard you say against duelling. And most cordially do I agree in it all ; for he whose heart is right with God and man would never commit so atrocious an act as that of fighting a duel ! A gentleman would not give offence ; and were he to do so unintentionally,

he would be sure to make an apology, and would not fancy it otherwise than a degradation to place his life and reputation in the hands of a bl—cg—d. I write the word in this way not to shock my dear mother. I knew nothing of this affair till now, although it seems it has been long enacting.

“Schönstein was a bully of the first water, considered handsome by those who admire a brigand style of beauty. He was ever making himself conspicuous by some astounding and heartless act of profligacy. He chose to consider himself a monarch among his comrades; and his boon companions were led by him into every species of vice.

“There was a man of the Hebrew persuasion particularly obnoxious to them all; and, sooth to say, he was deserving of all their contempt. This man one night Schönstein ejected from a ball-room, merely because it was an act of arbitrary power agreeable to him; and then he boasted to his partner, that having killed him morally, he in a few days would kill him physically.

“Who could think this threat was meant to be put into execution ! It was one of the strangest parts of this sad tale, that everybody knew (even the prince who commanded the garrison) all that was projected, and no one interfered to prevent it. At what a low ebb religion, honour, and morality must be when such can be the case !

“It was difficult to get the Jew to fight. He, wisely, had no inclination for the play ; so he stirred up a poor Italian, who had no more wish for it than himself. But at last, by dint of urging and bullying from one person and another, a quarrel was got up between Schönstein and Galotti.

“They went out. Schönstein determined that one or the other, or both, should fall. It must be an event to be talked of in the world ! He would be notorious ! For some time there was no result from the exchange of shots. At length Galotti wounded Schönstein mortally ! But before he fell, a second, as thirsty for blood as himself, gave him another pistol : in falling he fired it,—and Galotti’s soul was gone to its

dreadful account before Schönstein fell to the ground! Schönstein lingered some days. Bergthal, his second, did not leave him; and in some kind of way, imagined they patched up his soul for preparation to meet that awful Judge who has said, 'Thou shalt do no murder!'

"The sequel showed how little they understood what they were about. Bergthal made up his mind to avenge his comrade, and promised to kill the Jew. My dearest father, will you ever believe it? And yet it is an undeniable truth; for Bergthal went about telling everybody of his intentions, and practising at a mark that he might have a sure aim! And oh! worse than all, *women* lauded him for it, and widened the breach, kept up his ferocious courage,—and finally one of them promised to give a dinner for him the day after the duel; and if he were killed, the chair was to be vacant by the side of the young lady of the house. Does it not make one's blood curdle when one thinks of such horrors?

"The duel took place. Bergthal was killed



by the first shot,—the Jew triumphed! Mackintosh tells me the Countess Von W—— (I cannot bring myself to write her name) has since died,—that on her death-bed her agonies of remorse were indescribable. ‘I cannot die! I cannot die!’ she said, and struggled till she was almost convulsed. She openly acknowledged her guilt and her repentance; and when she had prayed fervently for forgiveness, she sighed and expired. We will hope her prayer was heard and accepted by Him who died for sinners.

“It is impossible to write another word to-day. I wish my own better thoughts were more constant. Alas! my dearest father, I feel I deserve your censure for my conduct on almost every occasion. Pray for the amendment of your graceless, but most respectful and affectionate son,

“L. T.”

## CHAPTER VI.

ON the 25th of June, Lady Colquhoun was to give a large evening party. At breakfast she received a note from Lady Mounthill, which ran thus:—

“Yesterday, when I paid a visit to Mrs. Orville, I found a charming girl there, Miss Emma Besmond, who is come to remain with Miss Danesfield till she returns to Ryville. She told me she was not invited to your house for this evening. I made no remark, but promised myself I would write you a line, to ask if you would send her a card. Will you do so? I am sure you will like Miss Besmond.

“Yours sincerely,

“ELIZABETH MOUNTHILL.”

Lady Colquhoun had no idea that exclusiveness and rude refusals preserve dignity and proper pride of caste. She wished her parties to be pleasant to all who attended them ; so she complied immediately with the request. What great consequences arise from small causes ! This little act of courtesy was the seed sown which produced years of happiness in her own domestic circle.

The rooms were opened to receive the company. The Mounthills were all standing ready to welcome their guests, and to show by cordial smiles that it was a real pleasure to see their friends. Lady Alice Fontain and Lady Margaret Stanhurst had joined the family circle : their husbands were in the House of Commons, and promised to look in upon them before the party dispersed, if they could get away in time.

Lady Alice Fontain and Lady Margaret Stanhurst were worthy daughters of worthy parents. Amiable, lady-like, unaffected, they had no reason to stand up for the rights of precedence. They seemed so instinctively to

know, and take their place in society, that it never occurred to any one to hesitate about it; nor were they ever in the least annoyed when it was not accorded to them. They were both of them excellent wives. Their fault was, that they were over-fond mothers. Their children had failings, like all other children,—but they could not see them; and it was very laughable to hear each talk of her own, as if they were Sheridans and Mrs. Nortons for wit and genius,—whilst the remarks of the children could only be considered clever by a too partial mother. Aunts, it has been said, on this score are as great fools as mothers. Lady Myra, likewise, was doing her best to bring them up in the ways in which they should *not* go. Altogether, the grandchildren of the house of Colquhoun were as pert and disagreeable as all spoilt children are in every class of life.

The little Fontains had a nurse who was extremely ill-tempered, but by far too expert in her avocations to be dismissed on that account. Her ways were various for teaz-

ing them. She would not give them what they asked for, till there had been a regular storm about it; and one day, when she was more pertinacious in her refusal than usual, one of the little wonders said, "Nurse, what am I to do more, before you give me that cake?—I have both kicked and cried for it." The logic was perfect; and the cake was immediately given.

One boy, when told to be patient, and take example by Job, answered candidly,—“I do know Job very well. He was a nasty, disagreeable old man! I do not want to be the least like him.”

How amazingly surprised Lady Margaret was, one day, when she overheard some one saying to her mother, “Oh no! I don’t think them very ugly; indeed, I should not be greatly astonished, if one or two of them were to grow up decently pretty!” And that of *her* children!—her children, whom until then she had thought fit subjects for a Lawrence’s pencil!

Amongst the first that entered the room that evening were Mrs. Orville, Agnes, and Emma.

Lord de Basset was standing at the door when their names were announced. Always ready to pay the greatest deference to age, he stepped forward to offer his arm to Mrs. Orville. He saw Emma Besmond! In a moment his heart was gone! from that instant, wayward, restless,—a prey to every change of feeling, from the depth of despair, to the height of bliss! he was no longer master over his own looks or words. He had from that hour but one thought. Every breath he drew was full of Emma Besmond! She could not but remark it, and was not a little flattered.

Emma's self-control, however, was not easily shaken; and it would have puzzled the vainest of men to perceive that she had seen the impression she had made. Without being a decided flirt, she had no objection to play fast, and loose a little with a man's heart,—and was by no means in a hurry to let him have hers. Contrasts are attractive; and Lord de Basset, used to military obedience, was charmed immeasurably by her pretty wilfulness.

Agnes saw for the first time the meeting of

the evening between Rosa and Julian; and did she ever forget that bright look of intense affection—of boundless joy? It was beautiful in her eyes. She wished it had been possible to have reflected it on canvas, that she might ever have it before her. How much eloquence there may be in a single glance!

Rosa met him kindly, but with no pleasure more apparent in her countenance than she would have shown on meeting with her brother. She and Julian both seemed to think, it was so decided a thing that she should never forget him who lay in his grave, that he did not tell his love, but was contented to feel it.

The first look alone betrayed his secret to Agnes. She saw it not again. Julian was not in the habit of hazarding his sentiments or his opinions. The former he never talked about; the latter he never gave, except when asked. His advice, however, was demanded this evening; and Agnes had, at last, the great delight of a tête-à-tête with him. She told her strong, strong wish, which she declared

grew stronger every day; and, after weighing many things, finally decided that they should try — What? Never mind; she was pleased with the decision, and was resolved to tell it to no one, until she had brought the plan to some little maturity.

“By the bye, Julian,” she said, her curiosity becoming suddenly aroused (she knew not from what cause), “do tell me what this romantic reason of mamma is for being so very, very fond of you?”

Julian, seldom off his guard, was at a loss for a moment what to answer. Speedily, however, recollecting himself, he replied, “Without my aunt’s especial leave, I should not like to tell you. It began by a letter she received — Actually I was on the point of explaining this strange affair! Let us go to tea,” he added abruptly.

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“Henry,” said Sir Charles Mounthill next morning, folding up a letter he had just been reading, “have you any particular friend for



whom you would like an appointment in the Treasury? This letter places one at my disposal."

"Indeed, I have, my respected parent,—for the man who ought to have been my best friend, and has been my greatest enemy."

"What a noble boy you are, Henry! Who is this person towards whom you are so forgiving and so generous?"

"Myself, father."

"Yourself! Why, you idle dog, I do not believe you know how to spell, much less to write."

"Don't quiz me so unmercifully, my dear father. I have been idle till now; but I wish very much to turn over a new leaf, and begin a new phase of my existence."

"Supposing, dear boy, I give you this appointment, or rather accept it for you,—I am afraid, on account of the favourable state of my own finances, there will be a terrible outcry about it."

"I only want to work. The salary I will give to Mrs. Douglas, our poor widowed cousin,

who is in such need of it. It will surely be a nice way of procuring this little assistance for dear Charlotte."

"It is agreed, then. I will write this moment, and claim it for you."

Henry Mounthill was soon at his desk ; and all his energies seemed called forth by this first step. He made himself indispensable to the Minister ; and, beside, wrote many sensible, smart, temperate pamphlets, that gained him much applause, and were most useful to the Government.

Lord de Basset was sitting by Emma, when a note was brought to her from Sir Charles Mounthill. She opened it, read it, clapped her hands, and was wild with delight.

"My dear," said Mrs. Orville, "what joyful piece of news have you received?"

"Only think, Mrs. Orville, only think ! Sir Charles has written to me to say, that we are to have what he calls one of his intellectual

lotteries next week ; and guess,—no, you never can guess, that I, of all the people in the world, should write an Essay on the ‘ Rights of Woman ! ’ ”

“ Of course, you will refuse.”

“ Of course, I shall assent.”

“ An Essay upon the Rights of Woman ! Oh ! it is more amusing than anything I have heard of for a long time.”

Lord de Basset looked black as a cloud heavy with rain ; and muttering to himself, “ After all, that most hateful of all things—a female politician ! ” — walked to the window, and looked out into the square.

His brother Leopold, who had returned from Vienna the day before, had called with him upon Mrs. Orville ; and this was an opportunity not to be lost of playing off one of his pranks. Lady Myra had told him how the land lay with Lord de Basset ; and to tease him was his first thought and determination. He overheard his brother’s words ; and instantly taking the chair he had vacated by Emma’s side, he began to congratulate her upon the

choice of her task. He could easily read in her countenance (he alleged) that she was perfect mistress of politics in all its branches, and was capable of writing on the Wrongs or Rights of Women, till she would make the welkin ring with the burst of eloquence when it was read!—and paid her so many well-timed compliments, and pretended to be more and more in love with her already than that cold, stern man, De Basset, who had the honour of being his brother, with his handsome face, and clear, merry, melodious voice, he rivetted her attention; and De Basset was stung by jealousy, as he was disappointed by what he called the unfeminineness of her mind. “Sir Charles,” he said, turning to Miss Danesfield, “has showed his usual discrimination of character. I should never have imagined that Miss Emma Besmond could have chosen such a subject for her pen! He has desired me to write upon ‘Temper.’”

Agnes smiled; and thought to herself, that if experience of a good or bad quality enabled one to descant upon it, he had been wisely

selected, for during the morning he had shown temper of every shade and quality.

"What are you to do, Miss Danesfield?"

"Nothing. Sir Charles does not want many treatises for that evening: he is afraid it might become tiresome to hear too much of that kind of reading."

Leopold exclaimed, "Oh! you may well talk of Sir Charles' discrimination: he has desired me to write on 'Foibles,' by way of giving me a gentle hint that I have myself a few too many. I have not that one of showing myself up for public inspection. I shall therefore indulge him with a list of those of the Baroness Scrou Von Scrou: they are much more entertaining than mine; and it is so much more easy to describe one's neighbour's faults than one's own."

Emma laughed heartily at this nonsense; and De Basset, more and more provoked, got up to go away. He made the ladies a stiff bow. Leopold did exactly the same, and with one bound was down the staircase, over his brother's head; and before his Lordship had

time to recover his astonishment, he coolly offered his arm, and said, "Come, let us go and mount our horses, and be ready to ride by the carriage of these ladies."

To be angry, De Basset found would be useless, and, indeed, was difficult; for it was unmistakable that Leopold was only in one of his nonsensical humours. He therefore allowed himself to resume his wonted state of quiet demeanour. He longed to see Emma again; yet the idea of her being a politician was quite a blister upon his love. Should he give her up at once? To be happy with her as his wife, he thought quite an impossibility; to continue to pay attention to her, without the positive intention of proposing, was a dishonourable act of which he was not capable. Give her up altogether? No, that he could not do! What a perplexity was his! He made a compact with himself that he would see as little of her as he could help till that evening of the lottery, and to determine after hearing her Essay read what should be done. At present, his and her happiness were at stake. He

almost prayed that she should write something so very stupid, that she might be persuaded she was unfit to handle such subjects, and to make her promise never to expose herself again by doing so.

Thus was Emma punished for her levity. After the lottery, she was to return with Mrs. Orville and Agnes to Ryville; and it was only when she saw that day after day went by, and he came not, she perceived what a hold he had upon her affections. He did not ride by the carriage that day. So Leopold had the pleasure of flirting with Emma all that week; but it had lost its attraction for him, as he had no one to worry by it,—and Emma was so absent, she did not amuse him in the least. Still, he had the pleasure, whenever he met his brother, of making him believe he was scarcely out of Mrs. Orville's house; and De Basset winced under the tidings. He could never *feign* feeling, although he could repress the demonstration of what was passing within him.

Now came poor Agnes' day of trial. She received a letter from Mrs. Falker, which

crushed her gentle, affectionate, confiding spirit, and made the world a blank to her!

“MY DEAR MISS DANESFIELD,

“I hasten to write to you to-day, as you are coming back on Tuesday, lest you should think I have forgotten you all this time; and yet, mildly as you rebuke an offender, I do not like to incur your displeasure. You will find Ryville very much as you left it,—prettier, perhaps, because it will appear so bright after the dinginess of London.

“I am happy to think your dear mamma is somewhat better; indeed, that she is able to sit up some hours in the day is a great improvement. She is rather agitated this afternoon, by Mr. Travers’ sudden departure. [Agnes could hardly draw her breath.] I will tell you all about that event later. I always thought that man a hypocrite; and so he has turned out. Indulgent and sweet tempered with a vengeance! He is a very spitfire!

“Mrs. Danesfield has received much kindness from her neighbours. As usual, I have



gone in most days, to tell her the news ; and Mr. Sandford has brought flowers, fruit, and books, very often. Your mamma is a little queer about books ; and since she has refused that most exciting book, 'Jane Eyre,'—saying that the extracts in the Review had sufficed her to form an opinion upon it, I have not again attempted to cater for her amusement. I dare say, Mr. Travers has been prosing about it. She certainly has, however, smiled more than once—(her peculiar smile has more meaning in it than any smile I ever saw)—when we have gone to her with a new remedy. She refused every advice we could offer. I dare say, she would not have done so, had Mr. Travers proposed one. She makes quite a pope of that man ! We all spoke of our favourite systems of cure ; but she would listen to none,—showing to each of us how very incredulous she was. [Poor Agnes was quite in a fever by this time.] We vaunted all the wonders done by Hydropathy, by Mesmerism, by Mademoiselle Julia, by sympathy, by vapour baths. We assured her, over and

over again, how infallible each system was, and ours in particular the most so. She always smiled, and said, 'I have the best advice, and cannot, indeed, make a choice amongst such miraculous systems as are daily described to me. Were the first not to succeed, all the advocates of the second would assure me, if that failed, it was because I did not begin with it. Exaggeration is never right; and I hope my medical attendants have the good sense to take a little from each new idea, so as to make a more rational system.' As to Homœopathy, she says, she could not stand that; for she saw how every lady's complexion was spoiled by it, and she had too much vanity to make hers so ugly. Your very sensible mamma does talk a great deal of nonsense sometimes.

"Well, it is time to tell you about Mr. Travers. I met him in the street yesterday. He was rather in a hurry, and did not seem much to wish to speak to me. But I am not to be avoided in that bearish way; so I accosted him with, 'Have you been to Grey Cottage to-day?'

‘No,’ he said, ‘not yet.’ ‘Can you make out why there is such a mystery about Miss Danesfield’s engagement?’ He looked so queer when I asked that! and said, ‘I was not aware there was an engagement.’ ‘Not know that she is to marry her cousin, Mr. Delancy?—why I thought all the world knew it.’ He actually turned pale with anger. I suppose, because the darling was not informed sooner. I added, ‘Mrs. Danesfield will not admit it,—but that only makes me more sure of it; indeed, a friend wrote me word from London, that the wedding is to take place almost immediately, and that Miss Danesfield was looking forward with great pleasure to having the ceremony performed by you.’ Thereupon he went off, as if he had been shot; and to-day, I hear, he is gone into Lancashire, leaving Lord Rosmore to do duty for him for an indefinite time.

“Did you ever hear of such an arrogant spirit? He indeed cannot permit his parishioners to get married, without his previous consent. These over holy men are always so

ill-tempered, and overbearing, and domineering!

"How glad we shall be to welcome you back, dearest Miss Danesfield! I long for Tuesday.

"Your devotedly attached friend,  
"SARAH FALKER."

Mrs. Falker longed for Tuesday! Oh! so did Agnes, before she read her letter. Mr. Travers gone! what would Ryville be to her? And gone for an indefinite time! could any sorrow be like hers? She felt then, for the first time, how dear he was to her. She now found she had made an idol of him, and wept bitterly. She took up the envelope mechanically, and the name of Travers struck her again. She wiped her eyes, and read as well as she could through her tears:—

"P. S.—Lord Rosmore is so delighted with Ryville, it is believed he and Mr. Travers will exchange livings."

Gone! and gone perhaps for ever! What? go to Ryville, and perhaps never see Mr. Travers again! Oh, how she wept! All Mrs. Falker said coarsely and impertinently of him passed unheeded. She had never cared for Mrs. Falker's judgment respecting any one; and she did not give her opinion of Mr. Travers one thought. How differently she interpreted his departure! She recalled all his words, looks, and tones. Memory whispered that she was loved; and yet it was unlike him to go off in that way, without one word of inquiry as to the truth of Mrs. Falker's assertion. And then again she recollected that he had more than once repeated, "My curate says, we men can be wise, sensible, and learned in our professions, but egregious simpletons in love affairs;" and she thought that even the perfect Mr. Travers had proved how correct the remark was.

Mrs. Falker's mischief did not end here. Julian received a note from her, by the same post:—

"DEAR MR. DELANCY,

"Would you take the trouble to call at Bull's for me, and bring Shirley down with you? We are all looking forward with great pleasure to your marriage with Miss Danesfield, and hope we shall have some very gay doings upon the occasion.

"Yours truly,

"SARAH FALKER."

How astonished Julian was! His marriage with his cousin! He laughed very merrily at the foolish gossip of Ryville, and thought how soon they would be undeceived,—but would they be? He saw Agnes that morning: she talked with tears in her eyes, and with such a sad voice of going back to Ryville. His affectionate heart was immediately flattered. Could it be that Agnes was sorry to leave London, because he lived there? Had she mistaken him, and taken it for granted that he was attached to her? Had he misled her by his cordial manner, and the happiness he

felt and expressed at Ryville? Or was she disappointed that he was not more explicit—had not proposed? He was sadly puzzled; for he had not the slightest intention of marrying her,—and how was he to tell her so? If she really were in such grief because they were to part, it was unkind indeed of him to have been so unguarded as to allow her to suppose that he felt more for her than cousinly friendship. He must see whether it was too late: he might perhaps school himself to wish for an union with her. Rosa knew not of his love: he never breathed it to mortal. He might yet make Agnes happy, who appeared so devoted to him. Rosa he knew would not accept him.

Many hundreds of young men have fancied women in love with them upon much slighter premises; and Julian was not to blame, if he thought, in his utter unselfishness, he ought to sacrifice his own happiness to make that of his charming cousin: so he determined from that hour, at least, to try what could be done to repair the mischief which had arisen

so totally without any fault of his. Mrs. Danesfield he knew was very averse to marriages between cousins: still, if the happiness of her darling Agnes so entirely depended upon her union with him, Mrs. Danesfield would be won over to consent.



## CHAPTER VII.

“Y love,” said Sir Charles to Lady Mounthill, “I quite grieve that this is to be our last evening with Mrs. Orville’s party. Those friends of Rosa’s are such nice girls: they show simplicity and delicacy even in the choice of their dresses. Tallyrand would never have been able to say of them, in mock admiration, it was a pity there was so little of so rich a material, and that such charming dresses should *commencer trop tard et finir trop tôt*. I confess, I augur a great deal from the way in which girls dress, as to the innate modesty and tenour of their thoughts.”

Sir Charles saw in a moment that Agnes was not happy, when she came to his house that evening; and that it arose from some

more potent cause than that of her approaching departure from London. But he refrained from making any allusions, as he felt persuaded he could not console her by anything he said: he judged kindly, that the only way of showing his sympathy was by being more attentive to her than usual.

The dinner was very pleasant: all the Colquhoun party were present. The gentlemen left the dining-room soon after the ladies, to make as little delay as possible in furthering the object for which they had met.

Lord Leopold's paper on "Foibles" was the first that was read. How vexed De Basset was that it was not his Emma's! He was in such a state of agitation, that afraid of betraying it, he went and sat down in a corner, and screened himself behind one of Mrs. Trollope's last novels, which he found lying on the table, and which he took up and pretended to read.

None but Emma missed him from the circle. All else were engaged in listening to Sir Charles. No one read with such intonation

as he did. There was no *mouthing*, no hesitation, no dropping of the voice, no raising it too high, no galloping, no drawling. It was clear, sonorous, not monotonous. Attention never flagged. One felt he could read on for hours, and no one could be wearied. He began:—

“This is an exemplification of the Foibles of Her Excellency the Baroness Scrou Von Scrou, the wife of a German high in favour at his sovereign’s court.

“It may, perhaps, appear strange to choose a foreigner for the subject of such a paper; but, ladies and gentlemen, you are aware that I have lived more on the Continent, since I became a man, than in England. And I have no doubt that all of you could bring forward thousands of traits of English people, which would counterbalance all that I could say of my foreign friends and they probably have kept as strict an account of the foibles and excentricities of your humble servant.

“Parsimony, vanity, and folly were the

component parts of the character of my charming subject. What her redeeming qualities were, I need not mention. This is a chapter on Foibles. Midas was a fool to her in his power of turning everything into gold; for *she* derived full advantage from the wonderful virtues of her wand of economy. If you walked in her garden, and admired her asparagus, she would ask, 'How many hundred shall I send you, at a farthing per head?'—and would add, 'Do not crush my fallen rose leaves: I shall have them picked up this evening to be sold to the chemist,—he will distil them.'

"A young friend of her daughter's expressed a wish that she should choose some new music, as she was going away, and should like to take some with her. How delighted she felt to be of use to so agreeable a person! The very next morning the music was sent, and with it a bill at the shop price for each piece. The daughter had learnt it all by heart, and was quite able to spare it.

"If she went anywhere on a country expedition, and bought any article of too large

dimensions for her own household use, she would share it with some lady present, that lady being asked to pay the whole; and next day, pretending to fancy it was her own money that was borrowed, would send to claim payment for the half she had not.

"The Baroness fancied no one knew how to make their servants so happy as she did. 'I give them,' she said, 'five meals a day,—a little soup at eight, a piece of bread and a pear at eleven, soup at one, a piece of bread and an apple at five, soup again at eight.' Which reminds me of one of O'Connell's stories. He met a friend in the street one day, who asked him if he had dined, and what he had had for dinner? 'Praties and bafe,' responded the great agitator. 'Faith, then, that's odd; for I have had the same, barring the *bafe*.' The Baroness' upper servants had slices of meat each day from her own table.

"According to the custom of the country, she had a weekly allowance for the bills of the house, and for her own toilette. This

last sum she reserved as entire as possible; and when she wanted any particular article of expense, she would order some savoury dish for her husband, to keep his attention from the fact that there was no *plat de resistance*, and quietly put the money the joint would have cost into her own purse.

"Her presents to her children and friends were of the most unusual kind. She heard that her son was in want of under-waistcoats; so she bought them, cut them out, and gave them to her daughter-in-law as a present for herself. And this pretty young woman, having made them up, had the pleasure of presenting them in her turn to her husband.

"She once asked a lady to take a parcel for her to Russia, to her dear sister whom she had not seen for many years. The lady consented, and took as much care of the precious goods entrusted to her as if it had been a bale of silk dresses; and was not a little mortified, on her arrival, to find it contained pears sliced ready for cooking!

"When her daughter married, she went to

the unheard-of expense of buying a pair of molten glass vases for the altar; in which she placed Virginies' old flowers which she had worn in her hair, and on her dress, at all the balls of the previous two years. 'Look,' she said, one day, 'how delightfully I have made up this cap! The milliner gave me some scraps of net, and I have taken tulle and ribbon off Virginies' shabby gown, and have not even had to buy the thread, for this is the very same which was used to sew on the trimming with.'

"She actually had her house built on the north side of the street, lest the sun should spoil her furniture; and was so tidy, she declared, the sight of dust on her chairs and tables made her feel faint; and if the housemaid put the blue jug with the red basin, she cried.

"Fond of show, she was desirous of being the most admired of all women, and imagined that dress alone could win all hearts. So that when her glass told her she was attired charmingly, she went off to a party trium-

phantly ; but if she met any one more appropriately dressed than herself, that moment all the pleasure of the evening was gone.

"She had been very desirous that her son should shine in society ; and when told by his tutor, in language more truthful than courteous, that he would never be anything more than an ass, she tartly replied, 'Let him be an elegant ass, and I shall be satisfied !' The husband used to say, no one in the world bored him so much as his wife, unless it was his son.

"When His Excellency died, the weeping widow was observed to place a paper in his hand, as he lay in the coffin. The trustee observing it, and fearing it might be some important document she was burying with him, waited until she had left the room. Then taking the paper from the dead man's hand, he read the following tender epistle :—'When you are in heaven, ask St. Peter to intercede for me, that I may look young and pretty as long as I live !' She kept his heart in a vase on her boudoir table.



"Her folly, vanity, and heartlessness were strongly developed one evening, when in a most vexed tone she told me, 'I have had so many misfortunes to-day! The cook spoilt my best dish. My footman came into the drawing-room, with a message to me, without his coat, and the sleeves of his linen garment (she called it by name) not over clean, when the French Minister was sitting by me. I have also had a letter, telling me that my mother is dying.'

"And now my tale is ended."

The sensation created by this narrative was very great; for all knew that Lord Leopold Thornton, in the midst of all his foibles, still retained that English characteristic—a love of truth.

Next came the paper on "Temper." Lord de Basset had not written it. He felt himself so unequal to any task demanding calm thought, that he had made over to Henry Mounthill that of descanting upon that enemy to domestic happiness and peace.

"I wish," wrote Mounthill, "I could borrow Mr. Thackeray's pen on this occasion. No man could say better all that can be said upon this too general failing. His style; his quiet way of saying the most pungent things, expressing a world of thought; such deep and natural feeling; so much sense in a few words,—exactly what is requisite this evening. He would not, however, be able to draw much venom from the heroines of his own novels; for he makes them wofully soft,—they might be taken for animated wadding. How correct he is in making his amiable women shed tears plentifully! For it is astonishing with what facility some people give themselves this habit, encouraging it as a sign of much emotion; when, in truth, the more intense the feeling is, the less it is displayed in this way.

"Sarcasm and wit should be enlisted in the battle waged against ill-temper. Could a man continue to distort his features,—to issue forth such discordant sounds, and use such fiery, unmeaning language,—to gesticulate like

a mad man, because his fish was not properly drest, or he had arrived too late at the station for the train,—if he were sensible how extremely ridiculous he made himself?

“Ill-temper is an illness that ought to be cured with the most persevering attention to every means likely to effect it; and, like illness, although it is sad for all who witness it, it is sadder for the unfortunate sufferer. Whether man or woman, that being is to be pitied who has not learnt self-control, who allows herself or himself to be carried from the equilibrium of self-possession by any outward circumstances. In matters of importance, it must greatly aggravate the evil to be borne. In trifles, it lowers a human being to the equality of a cur or cat.

“How much of the happiness of the family circle depends upon the firm determination of each member of it to bear and forbear! People are brought up together, and come in daily, hourly contact, who have different ideas, different wishes, different hopes, different interests:

uld therefore unite in the common cause,

to make the law of kindness and courtesy the will of every thought, word, and action.

"A president there should be to each little republic,—one on whose firmness, wisdom, and judgment, the comfort of the whole community hangs. Obedience to parents should never cease, as long as all live under the same root, or until the sons and daughters have to preside over establishments of their own. Brothers and sisters should begin, as soon as they can speak and act, to live for each other's happiness. No unkind, sharp words should be allowed. No surer plan for a continued state of warfare can be found, than the striving after peace by making all the best-tempered cede upon every occasion to the worst. An overindulged child will grow up an imperious self-willed man. I should much like *Punch* to draw a series of pictures—caricatures they could not be—of people giving way to selfishness, passion, sullenness, and peevishness.

"It is each person's positive duty to do this work of amendment from within. Outward restraints are feeble in their effect; and

experience has shown me, that if aid from above be asked, it will be granted.

“Let us all and each strive to be courteous, and easy to be entreated. How surprised any man would be, at the end of the week, to have an exact account of all he said during that time handed to him, with the angry looks and impatient actions that had added so much to the effects of his words! Could a glass be held to him at the moment of giving way to passion, he would recoil from the sight of himself, and no longer wonder if he were feared—not loved.

“The unmanliness of ill-temper is especially evinced by the fact that women, dependants, and inferiors, are always the objects of it; and that the very man who has scolded and sworn at his wife, a moment before, will appear to his guests the personification of all that is bland, gay, gentlemanly, and insinuating. But I am getting prosy, and will spin this yarn no longer.”

“My dear boy,” said Sir Charles, “I agree

in all you have written. I am persuaded that no man would remain ill-tempered, that could see himself as others see him."

Sir Charles drew from the basket a little roll of paper, inscribed, "A few words on Marriage, by an Old Man." There was no name, but it was believed Lord Colquhoun had written it.

"My dear young friends,—We are about to part; and I am so deeply interested in your welfare, I cannot refrain from writing you a little advice on the subject dear to the hearts of parents. However unfortunate any of us elder ones may have been in our choice—(although I am not one of those unhappy beings who have drawn a blank in the lottery of marriage, for my wife is all that man can require for the companion of his fireside,)—we are always desirous of seeing our children settled; and marriage, instituted in Paradise, and blessed at Canaan, is undoubtedly a source of great happiness, when entered upon with feeling and judg-

ment, and not from mere passion and worldly motives.

“Prince Tallyrand once said to a young friend, *Mariez-vous, ou ne vous mariez pas, vous vous en repentirez également.* For my part, I am inclined to reverse this axiom, and say, Whether you marry, or are forced by circumstances to remain single, if you choose it, you can find happiness in either position. If, as a married woman, you have the blessing of a reciprocal attachment, with the delight of a home of your own, over which you preside with pleasure ever new, you will have cares and anxieties to which that person whose heart is not bound up in another's would be a stranger. Concentrated joy, and concentrated grief, are undeniably the most intense. Whilst the unmarried woman, whose affections and occupations are diffused over a wider circle, feels a more equable enjoyment, one that is not likely to suffer from change, cold looks, or cross words; for, indeed, I cannot deny that a man has usually the peculiar faculty, if he be tormented with a grain of

leaven in his temper, of letting his wife have the full benefit of it. Let your choice, my dear young friends, not be guided by man's plausibility; for although you and your husband will inevitably find, when united, that you are, in many respects, totally different from what each supposed the other to be, still the wish and desire of both should be to mate with one whose sterling qualities will make the tie stronger as years roll on.

“Avoid irreligion, as you would the most venomous serpent. And do you, young ladies, endeavour to make your home so comfortable, by studying the peculiarities of your husband's ways, and trying to keep him by the same attractions which won him, always receiving him with a smile, and never pouting, nor snubbing him, nor talking at him,—so that he may see that he is nowhere so loved, appreciated, upheld, and caressed, as in his own family; and depend upon it, if he is ever so much inclined to rove, he will return to your loving care with daily and increasing satisfaction. I once heard a young man say, that



he would not marry, if he could not ascertain from the maid of the lady of his love, that she was always appropriately dressed at home, was tidy in all her ways, and that trifles did not 'put her out;' that she never scolded sharply; and that she was indulgent to her servants, without the least familiarity.

"Never mind a man's looks,—see that his heart is in the right place; and if he has been a good son and brother, be *assured* he will make a good husband. Before we meet again, I hope that many of you may have drawn prizes, and will be deriving much happiness from following my rules. God bless you all, my dear young people, and guide you in this most important matter."

Sir Charles' voice rather faltered when he read the last line: he thought of Rosa. Henry thought of Mary Besmond, and how pleased his father would be when he brought him such a daughter-in-law. De Basset was uncomfortable. Agnes sighed deeply. Rosa smiled mournfully. Julian, with his sanguine

temperament, hoped that in some way things would turn out well for him. Emma felt ashamed and depressed, to think how much she had lost by her own waywardness. Not one of them read rightly the Book of Fate, except Julian; for he always felt satisfied with what the wisdom and love of God allotted him, and his spirit of sweet contentment made him comparatively happy under the most adverse circumstances.

Now came the all-important moment for De Basset. He felt almost suffocated by the various emotions that oppressed him. His Emma's Essay on the "Rights of Women" was proclaimed by Sir Charles, in a clear audible voice. With a benevolent smile playing round his lips, he commenced:—

"I begin now to see the difficulty of the task I have accepted,—not from the barrenness of my subject, but from the impossibility of doing justice to this glorious theme. That women have rights seems to be almost a contested point; and many learned, and

very many more foolish pages have been written about it. But, oh! indeed, we have them. The rights of women are immeasurably great: they are undeniable. 'In what do they consist?' I hear you ask. Gentlemen, be gallant, be courteous, and bear patiently with me, whilst I dilate on my woman's rights—my woman's privileges: they are multitudinous.

"We have a right to a seat, not in the House of Parliament, but in the hearts of those with whom our lot is cast. We have a right, not to a place on the hustings,—not to make ourselves conspicuous in a mob,—not to bias the opinions of electors, who know as little often of the matter as ourselves,—not to decide in favour of a candidate for public honour;—but we have a right to use our eloquence in behalf of injured innocence,—to mitigate woe whenever we find it. We have a right to influence our husbands, fathers, brothers, in all that is good or  
not to make them Whig, Radical, or  
no, but to induce them to be zea-

lous in all that is upright, benevolent, and impartial. We have the right to endeavour to make ourselves worthy of esteem and of love. We have the right to make our homes abodes of cheerfulness, piety, and peace. We have the right to be sensible and rational companions. We have the right to study to avoid giving any occasion of speaking evil or unkindly of us, by not obtruding ourselves into spheres and occupations for which the too much heart, and the too little head bestowed on us, unfit us."

Who shall describe the effect these words had upon Lord de Basset? The man who could face an enemy with the most imperturbable coolness, who could sway the most refractory in an undisciplined corps, could not command his own feelings. Regardless of the presence of so many lookers on, he rushed up to Emma; and, although his voice almost refused to come at his bidding, he did in the most passionate tones exclaim to Emma, "Give me, oh! give me the heart

that can feel, and the hand that can write in this way!"

Fortunately everybody else was engaged in interests and feelings of their own. This vehemence of De Basset's was observed by Emma only. She was considerably startled at first; but when she had recovered the shock, she looked smilingly and sweetly in his face, and said, "But what would my mother think, if I engaged myself to one unknown to her?"

Lord de Basset comprehended that this was no refusal, and answered, "With your leave, I will go with Delancy and Mounthill on Saturday to Ryville; and then Mrs. Orville will, I am sure, kindly introduce me to Lady Besmond."

The rest of their conversation was, like all conversations of the kind, very winning and pleasing to the two, but would be most extremely tedious to a third.

We will turn to the others of the party. They had betaken themselves to the refreshment-room; and soon afterwards, cloaks and

shawls being brought in, a general good-bying began, when Sir Charles claimed the privilege of an old man, kissed Agnes and Emma on both cheeks in the foreign fashion, and promised them that, before going to his country seat, when he left London, he would pass a few weeks at Ryville.

When Lady Myra Thornton retired to her bed-room, she found the faithful Jones waiting for her. Jones had been with her many years, and showed an attachment and devotion to her young lady that seemed daily to increase.

We are always fond of those who are objects of solicitude to us; and this excellent woman, unwearied in her duties, had taken care, during many long painful nights and days, of Lady Myra Thornton, who, not of a strong constitution, had had several severe fits of illness, through all of which Jones had nursed her with unflinching patience and tenderness. To her, Lady Myra gave an account of the evening at Mounthill House; and when she had told her all that Lord

Colquhoun had written upon marriage, Jones replied, "Law, my Lady, how very odd! Mrs. Brace and I was just talking about being married. This very evening, Mrs. Brace was saying, she thanked God she could love any man; and that we are not masters of our own partialities. Whilst I was giving her my opinion; and that is, my Lady, that men's is not worth a crab,—that sour, ill-grown fruit. Their love phizzes up like a rocket, and goes out as soon."

Poor Lady Myra! this was too much for her gravity: she threw herself into an arm-chair, and laughed long and heartily. Jones had gone through all the phases of a woman's heart in her life-time, which are the same, with modifications and variations, in the palace or the cottage.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHO shall explain the mystery  
of dreams? Some people believe fully that they have no meaning. Others laugh at the idea of their import, as being imbued with superstition. Certain it is, that many proceed from indigestion; and it would surely be erroneous to take for the inspiration of some fairy spirit, or some watchful genius, the effect of a slice of tough mutton. Still, amongst the millions that are nightly dreamt, and have been nightly dreamt through such thousands of years, it is not a matter of great surprise that every now and then a dream should be realized. The waking dreams of our youth are not less vapoury than our visions of the night.



Mary Besmond dreamt that she was walking on the sea-shore; when she espied a beautiful yacht, at some distance, sailing towards Ryville. She watched it with an interest for which she could not account. The yacht came nearer and nearer, till close in shore; when a tall, slender young man stepped out of it into a boat, and was landed on the beach at the spot where she was standing. He was very striking in his appearance,—he looked grave, but not sad; and when turning to thank the sailors who had brought him, Mary observed he did it in a peculiarly kind manner. His words were few, but his tones were courtesy itself. The stranger appeared to notice her; and taking up his carpet-bag, carried it towards the parsonage. Passing by her he bowed. It all appeared so real, that when she awoke in the morning, she could scarcely fancy it was a dream, and related the whole circumstances to Lady Besmond at breakfast.

Lord Rosmore also had his vision. He dreamt he should be delighted with Ryville,—that he should accompany his cousin Travers

to church,—that he was in a pew, and that opposite to him was a young lady whose sweet countenance, full of humility and piety, would fascinate him. The first leisure moment after his arrival, he related his dream to Travers, who was much amused, for he was of a very humorous disposition; and though he never allowed the slightest approximation himself, or by others, to any joke upon serious subjects, he had all the joyousness of a young and happy boy. He quizzed Rosmore for his sentimentality and superstition.

Lord Rosmore took all in good part. Nevertheless, he thought much and very often of the amiable girl that appeared to him in the imaginings of Sleepland. He had come to spend a clergyman's week with Mr. Travers. Earnestly anxious to become a good pastor, he knew he should derive much benefit from passing some little time with his cousin; and when his friend Mr. Wise offered to take him to Ryville in his yacht, he gladly accepted,—and a few days' sail brought him to that pretty spot.

Lord Rosmore had succeeded to the title in consequence of the death of a number of heirs who had stood between him and it. Wedded as he was to his holy profession, he was very much pleased that the estates had been left to another relative of the late Lord, which disencumbered him from the necessity of attending to them; and an ample sum of money bequeathed to himself, left him full liberty to be most liberal in all his dealings with his parishioners and poor, and excluded the disagreeable obligation of appearing as a fortune-hunter in the choice of a wife. He was determined to marry. Strongly impressed with a wish of soon finding a partner for life, he was charmed with his dream, and resolved, in fact, if he did meet with a fair being exactly like the sweet apparition, he would lose no time in making himself agreeable to her; and though he could not insure success, he would do all in his power to deserve it.

The Sunday came; and I must do Lord Rosmore the justice to say, that his dream did not once occur to him. He was a truly devout

man; and once within the walls of the sacred edifice, he fully bore in mind the glad promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst,"—and never suffered his thoughts to wander from the prayer or holy song in which he was engaged. Travers' sermon delighted him; and he felt the truth of every word he uttered. Just however as he turned to leave the church, he became spell-bound. There, in the opposite pew, sat Mary Besmond! the very being who had appeared to him in his dream. Mentally saying, "That is the future Lady Rosmore,"—he left the church.

Next day, Mr. Travers took Lord Rosmore to call upon some of his pleasant neighbours; and as the Danesfields and Besmonds were his prime favourites, he introduced them first to him.

"Lady Besmond is just the person you would like, Rosmore. She has lived much in society. In her days of prosperity, she must have been a brilliant star. Once beautiful, she retains the blooming complexion and raven locks of

her youth. She is full of anecdote, and has read to advantage. Her memory is wonderfully retentive; and I am persuaded you will be friends immediately."

Mary Besmond was not at home, which, though a disappointment, was the best thing that could have happened, as by that means Lord Rosmore was more perfectly at his ease; and the head, not the heart, being at work, he succeeded fully in pleasing Lady Besmond.

The day however, shortly afterwards, dawned which was to bring him and Mary Besmond into each other's presence. They all spent an evening at Grey Cottage; when Lord Rosmore's thoughts were, from that time, full of love and marriage. As Travers did not explain his reasons to him for wishing to exchange duties for some weeks, he was most agreeably surprised by the proposition, and, fancying it was made out of kindness to him, closed with it.

Mrs. Orville and Agnes returned to Grey Cottage. The door was already opened ere they drove up to it: for the Danesfields' ex-

cellent Fritz had been on the look out for the fly that was to bring his young mistress home; and he welcomed them in such a respectful, cordial manner, that he showed at once that he considered that the brightest ray of sunshine was come back to gladden the cottage, and announced by his cheerful countenance and bearing that Mrs. Danesfield was unusually well. All their interests were his.

Mrs. Danesfield was, however, much shocked by Agnes' appearance. She repented in the silence of her heart having allowed her to enter into so much dissipation, so contrary to the tenour of her Ryville existence; and resolved to devote herself solely to the occupation of restoring her to her physical strength. She did not in the least suspect she had anything on her mind. She knew nothing of Mrs. Falker's letter; and much as she was aware Agnes would regret Mr. Travers' absence, the thought would never have come into her head, that her young Agnes could have a tender feeling for one so sedate, and so much her senior.

In a few days, everything went on as usual at the cottage, excepting that Agnes became more pensive; and when her mother asked her if she did not feel well, she turned it off with some gentle remark about something else, and avoided giving a direct answer. Every now and then she gave out, that she was very busy trying to execute the task Julian had given her. "A very difficult one it is, mamma. I like it very much though! You cannot be in the secret until I have done enough for him to revise and correct. Then, if he approves, I know you will,—won't you, dearest mamma?"

"I dare say I shall, Agnes. At all events, I am in no haste to hear your secret; for I have full reliance on the wisdom of his counsel,—and feel assured, that whether you fail or succeed, in whatever it is, the very occupation it gives you, will be of use to your mind."

And of use it certainly was. For Agnes had profited too much by Travers' sermons, and the advice she heard him constantly giv-

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ing to those of his parishioners who had met with disappointments; and she knew how to direct her thoughts, and to pray that her affections might be "set on things above." She would say to herself, "I am not worthy to become the companion of that holy man. It is good for me to be afflicted. He was indeed too dear to me. I never communed with my own heart upon the subject, but went on, from day to day, feeding, without even suspecting it, on the happiness of seeing him, and being with him. It is right I should have time to reflect upon this too much love for a human being."

Agnes began to feel a great deal of interest in the Rosmore flirtation, which was looking so serious; and she felt much pleased, as she could not have the society of Mr. Travers, that her dear friend should be at last upon the eve of entering on a brighter state of existence than had yet fallen to her lot. When she was out of spirits, she never found any cordial so efficacious as the endeavour, in some way, to alleviate the sorrows of another;



and on this principle, her friend's satisfaction was a balm to her own sorely tried heart.

Travers wrote occasionally to Mrs. Danesfield. His last letter had been a solemn narration of the death-bed scene of a lovely young woman, who had been cut off in the morning of her days. It was providential that he was in Lancashire at the very time ; for though Rosmore was very zealous, he had not had much experience in administering consolation or advice to the dying. His letter ran thus :—

“My mind is very much absorbed just now, my dear Mrs. Danesfield, by a most affecting event which has occurred in this place. Lady Lucy S —— was a highly-gifted young woman, accomplished, pretty, gay, and thoughtless as a child. She had been married to Sir Henry S —— little more than a year. He was a devoted husband, but neither sensible nor religious. He could imagine no other way of making his wife happy, than by indulging her in every wish and whim. The

housekeeper ordered the household matters, that she might have no trouble. He allowed her to fancy that the sight of sickness or sorrow was too much for her nerves. She rode, walked, or drove the whole day, when it was fine; or sang, or drew, or played at battle-door and shuttlecock for exercise, when it rained. But neither in fine weather, nor in bad, did she ever distress her delicate feelings by inquiring into the sufferings of the poor.

"She distributed money by handful, without the least discrimination; subscribed to whatever she was asked,—whether the tales told her were true or false, she did not seek to know. She had tears and guineas at command; and would sometimes express contrition, when she heard she had encouraged a beggar in habits of drunkenness,—but the next moment would give again with the same heedlessness.

"Balls, parties, of every kind, were her delight. About ten days ago she gave a grand out-of-door fête, which lasted twelve hours. It began with a breakfast; and then one

amusement followed another until night, when she had fireworks. By some unfortunate direction, one of the pieces fell upon Lady Lucy; and in a moment her muslin dress was in a blaze. Before the fire was extinguished, she was too severely injured for there to remain any hope of recovery. When too late, one of the gentlemen had taken off his coat, and thrown it over her. Had he done so at first, her life might have been saved; instead of which, all crowded round her, and fanned the flames by rushing about for carpets and water.

“I was sent for the next day; and a most heart-rending sight it was. I passed through the rooms where the breakfast, dinner, and supper had taken place; for they had judiciously laid them out in the house. It was melancholy to see the untidiness of the whole; and the fragments of the feasting; and to contrast the noise and merriment that had been, to the wailing that was then going on.

“Lady Lucy was wringing her hands when I approached her. ‘I am grieved, indeed,’ I  
‘see you in such pain.’ ‘Oh! do not

think of my pain, Mr. Travers: I scarcely feel it. Oh! save me, save my soul!' It then was revealed to her—the bitter agony of repentance over a wasted life.

"Lady Lucy was constant in church. In somewise she had kept the Sabbath holy; but her whole heart had been given to self and the world. Now that all her idols were about to be torn from her, she found that she had no resting-place for her soul's safety. She had *said* her prayers night and morning, from her infancy. She had never *prayed*; and far indeed was it from her wish to lead the sober, godly, righteous life, that she asked God with her lips to grant her.

"The whole dreadful truth flashed in one moment upon her. She continued to wring her hands, imploring me to save her. I knelt by her side, and prayed that I might be guided to say what was right for her, that she might yet find, at the eleventh hour, she might be received to work at least the work of faith and repentance. The hour for obedience was gone by.

"I first showed her how impossible it was for me to save her; that I could not even judge that her repentance was sincere; that God only, who made her heart, could read its secrets; and that Christ alone could save her. 'There is but one Mediator between God and man.' No intercession of angels, saints on earth or in heaven, could avail her; but that her Lord was ready, even then, to open his arms to receive her. She thoroughly believed (not with the understanding only, but with all the fulness of ardent affection and gratitude,) that the Atonement was sufficient.

"I did not choose to hear her confession of sin. I read to her the Sermon on the Mount, pausing at each verse, that she might examine herself, and ask forgiveness of any sins with which she could charge herself. Day by day I visited her, reading the 13th chapter of the 1st Corinthians, that she might see it was the love of God should have been the ruling impulse of every thought, word, and action. I read to her the 3rd chapter of the Gospel

of St. John; afterwards the 5th, 10th, and 15th chapters; another time the 8th of Romans; and afterwards, as she grew weaker, only verses from the Gospels, Epistles, and Revelations.

“For a very long time, she refused comfort. She saw her own great sinfulness, but she did not see her Saviour’s inexhaustible mercy; and often repeated to me, that people who had devoted their lives to God, as I had done, might go to heaven, but she could not. ‘Lady Lucy,’ I exclaimed, ‘I entreat you to understand the Gospel, in all its loveliness and simplicity. The holiest cannot enter heaven by any other road save that of the cross. No man’s works will save him. They are exacted as proofs of faith and love; but even they cannot be performed without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Oh!’ I added, ‘I beseech of you not to wish to weaken my prospects of eternal happiness: they are founded on the Rock of Ages; and I know that of myself I can do no good thing, and never shall be able to do so.’

“We prayed always when I arrived, and

before I left her. When she could no longer join her voice to mine, she made a sign that she heard.

“The day before yesterday, just as I entered the room, I heard her say, as if her strength and energy had returned, ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.’ Before I reached the bed, her spirit had ascertained whether her prayer had been granted. She was no more!

“We had conversed much, and prayed much, of all that concerned the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; and the day previous to her death, at her own earnest request, I administered it to her, most gladly, as you will believe.

“I inclose a £5. note, which I beg Miss Danesfield to be so kind as to distribute for me. About this time, I have always given certain things, amongst certain old men and women, amongst the very poor. Miss Danesfield knows what, and to whom, and will, I am sure, undertake to make the purchases, and bestow the little gifts for me. May I

be allowed to offer her the assurance of my very kind regards.

“Yours &c.,  
“FREDERICK TRAVERS.”

That letter made Agnes very happy; for she delighted to know that he had been about his Master's business, with so much zeal, love, and truth. Then he not only gave her an opportunity of doing good amongst the people who so much loved him, but of doing his very own good! Never was commission undertaken with so much pleasure.

She was rather annoyed with Julian about this time; for he came over to Ryville much oftener than he used to, and seemed to be her very shadow: and although she appreciated his delicacy, for she fancied he had read her secret, and forbore to tease her about it,—yet she knew how busy Mrs. Falker would be in watching them, and recording his frequent visits to Grey Cottage. She sometimes felt tempted to beg of him not to come so often to Ryville; but then



what excuse could she give? And how could she deprive Mrs. Danesfield of the delight of having Julian with her? She, who had so few amusements, and so many privations, found full compensation for all in his society.

Mrs. Orville now thought of returning home. The day before she left, Mrs. Danesfield put into her hand some lines she had addressed to her. She had occupied herself in rhyming, when her mother and daughter were in town. Mr. Orville had carried off her scraps of verse. These were the verses to her mother—

#### THE COMPLAINT OF MOTHERS.

When I was young, and you were young,  
 You were as young as I am now;  
 You were as young as I am now,  
 You were as young as I am now.



In sorrow's hour, thou meekly bow'st thy head,—  
 Thy Father's will, in all things, is thine own;  
 Thou oft hast felt, when bitter tears are shed,  
 God's gracious love and smile are mostly shown.

Thy children, and thy children's children, feel,  
 To bless and aid them is thy great delight;  
 And with full hearts, when to our God we kneel,  
 We praise him for his gift, each morn and night.

May the Lord's peace be with thee all thy days!  
 And when of this world's course thy fitful race is run,  
 Thou'lt hear Christ say, 'Thou hast walked in my ways;  
 Come and partake my joy, thou faithful one!'"

Mrs. Orville, after reading them, kissed her daughter, and said, "Dearest Laura, I cannot subscribe to all these flattering and pretty things you say of me; but, I feel, it is right that a parent should have the grateful homage of a child's heart and talents. It is never possible to love and cherish too affectionately those to whom we owe so much."

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"MY DEAR MR. TRAVERS,

"Your letter was indeed an interesting relation of a sad, sad event. Agnes and I wept over it; and yet we both felt glad you

were on the spot, to be such incalculable comfort in the hour of distress. I have something to relate to you in return, which you will immediately say is a proof of the strength of woman's curiosity,—that even at the moment of self-destruction can make her pause in the act, that curiosity might first be gratified.

“On Tuesday, Betsy Heywood was returning home, late in the evening, from Wellhurst, when three men accosted her; and seeing how terrified she looked, (you know what a timid creature she is,) they spoke impertinently to frighten her still more. Off she set running as fast as she could, in the full belief that the men were following her. She knocked at old Hannah's cottage: Hannah, deaf, and already asleep, did not hear. Fearing the men would come up with her, she ran to the Tomkins'. None of them were at home; so no one opened the door. Her imagination still full of the sounds of the men's tramp, she hurried on as fast as ever, and rung furiously at Lady Hawes' door-bell. The family is in town; and the housekeeper

only had been left in charge of the house. After a few moments, which appeared an age to poor Betsy, Mrs. Goodall let her in.

"Betsy was so agitated, that she did not remark that Mrs. Goodall was more so. While both were enjoying a cup of tea, Mrs. Goodall asked Betsy as a favour to sleep in the house with her. Right glad was she to do so; so fearful was she of encountering the saucy men again, if she ventured out into the village that night.

"The next morning, at breakfast, Mrs. Goodall told her, that had she not so opportunely rung at the door with that vehement pull, she herself would have been at the bottom of the sea; for she felt so wearied of life, and determined to support it no longer, that she was actually at the water's edge, and had stretched out her arms to throw herself in, when she heard the bell, and, quite forgetting for what purpose she was there, she instantly turned round, and ran as fast as she could to see who could be ringing at that late hour, and in that wonderful way.

“Betsy, with all her shyness and nonsense, is, as you know, one of those who have profited most by your instruction; so she was able to read Mrs. Goodall such a lecture upon the heinousness of her sin, that she not only promised never to make such an attempt again, but also to try and amend all her ways.

“I have a great favour to ask of you, my dear friend. I have had a letter from Harrow, telling me that George is very unwell, and that change of air, and abstinence from hard study, are absolutely necessary for him. Will you permit me to send him to your care for a little while? It would be such a relief to know he is with you.

“Agnes flew off to the village directly I gave her your £5. note. She seemed so happy to be your almoner, that her countenance quite brightened up. I have been rather uneasy about her lately,—not knowing whether her pensiveness is owing to the fatigue of London life, or regret that it is over. Julian occupies her a great deal. There is some plot concocting between them; and I am not allowed

to penetrate the mystery yet. She would, I am sure, send you some message, if she were at home. She is trotting somewhere about the village, endeavouring to supply your loss to the poor people.

"Lord Rosmore is very charitable, and would do everything in his power to help the distressed; but he has not yet attained your art of showing sympathy in so delicate a manner, that the people do not find their affairs and sorrows intruded upon by what appears to them superciliousness and meddling.

"Lord Rosmore will soon improve under Agnes' tuition. She makes me smile by always holding you up as a model. I am surprised at the marvellous quantity of your sayings and doings she has retained.

"Pardon my garrulity, my dear Mr. Travers,

"And believe me,

"Ever yours sincerely,

"LAURA DANESFIELD."

Reader, have you ever received a letter which has made you so happy, that you could have

embraced all the world for sheer joy,—even all the Mrs. Falkers in it,—and tell them of your happiness?—and yet, for the gift of the world itself, would not have mentioned it to a living creature? Such were Mr. Travers' feelings when he read Mrs. Danesfield's letter, so full of Agnes, his dear Agnes! What raptures to know that he occupied so much of her thoughts, and that she took a double interest in deeds of charity for his sake! How delightful to have George, that he might talk with him about Agnes all day long, without being found out! He was quite unmanned by his happiness, kissed the letter over and over again, and was as merry and light-hearted as could be.

He read the letter a second time; and then halted at the passage alluding to the mysterious bond between Julian and Agnes. What could that mean? Could it be a way of preparing him for the worst? He felt sure that Mrs. Danesfield had too much penetration not to have observed his love for her daughter; and feared she was trying to reconcile him by

her assurances of her regard and esteem, and would soon explain to him, with her usual tact, that that was all he must expect. Gentlemen, in his predicament, have a peculiar pleasure and way of tormenting themselves: they extract vinegar from roses, and honey from wormwood,—and flatter themselves they are wise beyond every one else that ever lived, ever since the world became a world.

Travers opened another letter lying on the table. It was from Lord Rosmore, giving a glowing description of the life he was leading at Ryville; only saying of the inhabitants of Grey Cottage,—“I like Delancy very much. He seems to have some great attraction here; for he spends most days in the week with the Danesfields. How his law gets on, I don’t know. Indeed, I fear, I am too selfish to care. My time and thoughts are engaged, you know, at the opposite end of the village.”

Lord Rosmore little knew what daggers his words were to his poor cousin. He had never heard the report about Julian’s engagement; and had not the least idea that Agnes was



anything to Travers, or Travers to Agnes. Be it as it may, the second reading of Mrs. Danesfield's letter, with the addition of Rosmore's remarks, completely damped all Travers' previous joy.

Lord de Basset had not failed to come to Ryville immediately after Emma Besmond had left London; and "mamma" consented without hesitation to his proposals. The preparations for the wedding were going on rapidly, as De Basset wished the ceremony to take place without any delay, and purposed going abroad for some weeks after; for he had no idea, he declared, of following the stupid fashion of retiring to some beautiful country seat, to sit in the bowers and saunter about the grounds all day with Emma. He believed that most of the unhappiness of wedded life was owing to the foolish custom of only seeing each other, and no one else, until they were tired of scanning each other's features, and before they were acquainted with each other's faults, virtues, or talents, none of which could be called forth in such seclusion. He

therefore resolved they should travel,—not as if their only aim was to get over so many miles in the day as they could; but they would do it leisurely, alighting even at the expiration of an hour, if that hour brought them to a town or spot worth visiting. This plan suited Emma likewise; and they promised to be with Lord and Lady Colquhoun for Christmas, when all the family would be assembled. Lord Leopold would be there again, as he was to leave Vienna for another embassy. The marriage was conducted very quietly.

The Mounthills arrived at Ryville at the appointed period; and it was a general jubilee, with, however, some little alloy, like all earthly bliss.

Julian was quite upset in all his cousinly resolutions, seeing Rosa every day in that charming familiarity which country amusements always engender. He felt every hour that he loved her more and more. They rode together, were often on the water from mid-day till sunset in the same boat; and when

Mr. Sandford took Rosa and Agnes in his carriage, he invariably asked Julian to accompany them. Rosa always joined in the music which Agnes and Julian sang together; and he at last began to fancy, that nothing could be right with their little concerts unless Rosa took part in them.

Rosa had now quite recovered her spirits. Mr. Chalmers had been dead three years. She only thought of him with that sweet sorrow that time brings for the irrecoverably lost. She was very gay, and with Julian constantly amused the friends they were with by their "bon mots," riddles, and the clever comical way in which they told tales. Sometimes Rosa would tell ghost-stories, just at the dusk of the evening, before the lights were brought in, and with such gravity, and such apparent belief in all she was relating, that her listeners felt quite awed.

What was Julian to do? He was very angry with himself; for he now became aware how dishonourably he was acting, at the time he fancied himself a perfect hero of self-denial

and kindness of heart. His eyes were open. He resolved he would speak to Mrs. Danesfield, and tell her all his perplexities, and ask her advice. It required a great deal of courage to lay bare his secret thoughts and feelings; for he was not accustomed to do so, not from cold reserve, but from the dislike he had of talking of himself. He had not the vanity to imagine such a subject could be interesting or pleasing to others. With Mrs. Danesfield, he however felt it was different,—that she had love and patience at his command to the greatest possible amount; and he could unfold the inmost recesses of his heart to her view, and see what she would wish and advise. Even the thought, that it was concerning her only daughter he meant to talk to her, deterred him not. Nothing could interfere with her affection for him. He only was acquainted with the cause of this fondness, which had in it such a spirit of romance. It was difficult, however, to find her at leisure for a lengthened conversation. No one's time is so little to be counted upon as that of an inva-

lid. There are a thousand petty arrangements of the day that make the sick person inaccessible for private conferences ; so Julian was obliged to curb his impatience, and wait for a favourable opportunity.

All this time, Henry Mounthill was detained in town. There was so much to be done in the political world ; and as he was one of the invisible wheels, which had the greatest part of the substantial work to do, he could not be spared. His name was seldom heard, but his influence was unbounded. While the greater men were the targets who received all the shafts of praise, or the venomous arrows of reprehension, he toiled on with unremitting labour and skill in the service of his country. He chose to write for a newspaper. He was much shocked by the rancour which party spirit evinced ;—how totally Protectionists, Free-traders, Whigs, and Conservatives, all forgot that a spoonful of treacle catches more flies than a barrel full of vinegar,—that St. James says, we should not use the same tongue to bless God and curse men,—and that the arch-

angel Michael durst not bring a railing accusation even against Satan.

"We editors," he used to say, "do not sufficiently recollect the awful responsibility of our immense influence. Thousands of thousands never read anything but a newspaper, and take all their opinions from their favourite one. Throughout all the world, the English papers are read daily; and no engine for the diffusion of knowledge of good or evil, or both, can be equal to the daily press in power. Should not the editor of a newspaper be anxious to build people up in those things that will make a fitting edifice for eternity,—to teach people to be in the world without being of it,—and to raise souls to Heaven by every line they write? All this may be aimed at, and greatly effected, by the calm dispassionate way in which subjects are treated. Well may those who read our papers exclaim, 'See how these Christians hate one another!' Never can I forget what a Chartist once said,—'If our superiors took as much pains to teach us what is right, as they do what is wrong,

we should be totally different in our conduct.' How full the papers are of horrible deeds—of crimes of every species, until the mind of those who devour every word with eagerness is quite embued with revolting details! Alas! it is too true that that is the way to be popular; but we should aim to serve God and our fellow-men, and not merely to augment the number of our readers."

What great improvement Henry Mounthill's own mind had gained, when he could write and reason thus!

Julian was aided in bringing about his conference with Mrs. Danesfield, in a way little expected by himself. He called at Grey Cottage one morning, when he knew it was too early for other visitors, and found Mrs. Danesfield reading her letters.

"Julian, my dear, read this note of Mr. Travers. Tell me what it means?"

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I am happy to tell you, dear George has already benefited by the change of air.

Is it true, what he assures me, that Miss Danesfield and Mr. Delancy are not engaged to one another? I was led to believe, from so many concurrent circumstances, that such was the case, that I shall wait in breathless anxiety for your reply.

“Most faithfully and sincerely yours,  
“FREDERICK TRAVERS.”

Julian seized the opportunity of telling all he knew, felt, and had done. Mrs. Danesfield listened in the utmost amazement. We are all better sighted as to what is going on in our neighbours' families than in our own.

Mrs. Danesfield could scarcely comprehend what Julian meant. When she did, she was for the first time in her life angry with her beloved Julian.

“What sad weakness you have displayed! Oh! Julian, you have often heard me say how much I consider firmness, upright judgment, and straightforwardness of conduct, indispensable requisites for a manly character. To be led away by impulse—to halt between



two opinions—may be forgiven in weak woman, when she has not the blessing of a judicious guide; but in a man, such things are unpardonable!” Her voice was scarcely audible,—her lips trembled with disappointment and grief.

At first, Julian was extremely irritated. He had come to his aunt, as he thought, in meekness and love, to ask her advice, and did not expect to be taken thus severely to task. His better feeling however soon prevailed, and he entered into a deliberate discussion of the whole matter; and Mrs. Danesfield was won over to forgive, and see that his error was one of inexperience, and to be persuaded by him that she should never have to accuse him of weakness again.

Agnes came in from the garden, and, finding them in earnest conversation, would have withdrawn, had not her mother called her back; and Julian rose, and left them alone. In her turn, she read Mr. Travers' note; and Mrs. Danesfield was, if possible, more astonished than by Julian's confessions, when her

child exclaimed with delight, "How very happy, how very happy I am! At last he knows the truth!" And throwing herself on her knees by Mrs. Danesfield, she told her the history of her heart, and the contents of Mrs. Falker's letter.

All this was a great deal for Mrs. Danesfield in her weak state. But when left by herself to pray and reflect, and recover from the vivacity of her emotions, she rejoiced greatly at the probable issue of the whole; for nothing could give her more entire satisfaction than an union between Agnes and Mr. Travers, and few things would have been more contrary to her wishes than marriage between her and Julian.

Julian went out to saunter on the beach by himself. He found Rosa sitting there, throwing pebbles into the sea, as if her fancy were roving far away from where she was corporeally present. Julian sat down by her side.

"Miss Mounthill, were you aware, when I wrote those lines at your house on 'True Affection,' of whom I was thinking?"

He spoke in such a marked way, and with that certain expression of countenance which had once struck Agnes so forcibly, and let her into the secret of his love, that Rosa felt rather abashed; but she answered very truthfully, "No, not in the least, Mr. Delancy."

"Could you forgive me, if I owned I was thinking of you?"

"I am afraid," she replied, "I should not only forgive you, but confess that I should be pleased and flattered."

"Miss Mounthill! Rosa! may I, dare I hope you would accept my hand? My heart's best affection has long been yours!"

"I think I could, Mr. Delancy. My dear parents are so fond of you,—I am sure they would be glad to have such a son-in-law."

"Indeed, Miss Mounthill, I am extremely flattered by their preference; but as I have not the least intention of marrying them, it is your affection I covet."

Rosa had not an atom of coquetry in her nature. She replied, "Mr. Delancy, you know

all the past,—can you be satisfied with a heart that has borne during so long a time the image of another?"

"Of the dead, I could not be jealous; of the living, I know, I should have no cause, when once vows had passed between us at the altar. I do not care to be the object of first impressions, provided I am that of the last."

He took Rosa's hand, and, gently pressing it, he whispered, "Then you will be my own, Rosa,—will you not?" And without waiting a reply, they rose and went to the house, when Rosa immediately repeated the morning's conversation to her parents. They were indeed delighted.

Lord Leopold Thornton, who could never allow an opportunity to pass off without making a saucy remark, (wit and courtesy are not always found united,) exclaimed, when he heard of this engagement, "Well, all I hope is, that Delancy will not have occasion to regret Mr. Chalmers' death!"

It seemed to be a day that Cupid was very

busy at Ryville. Agnes, singing, crying, and laughing, was tending her flowers, and feeding her pets; and Mary Besmond walked into the garden arm-in-arm with Lord Rosmore. There was no need to ask them to tell the tale their happy countenances betrayed. Agnes threw her arms round Mary's neck,—kissed and congratulated her with true girlish warmth. She shook hands with Lord Rosmore; and assured him, over and over again, that he had found an inestimable treasure in her friend, and that he would have the very best partner for life in the world.

By an unaccountable chance, Henry Mount-hill joined the group just at this moment. Who will not feel for him? He never once thought of the possibility of a rival! In one moment all the flowers of hope withered, as if scorched by the blast of a hot wind. In his despair, what did he do? What many a silly man has done before him. He returned immediately to town, and determined he would choose a wife that evening! How many, many marriages are made from pique! It was indeed fortu-

nate for him, that his star led him to the side of Lady Myra Thornton. Even before he knew what he was about, he had proposed, and had been accepted. His lot might have fallen on much worse ground; although Lady Myra, good-tempered and good-natured as she was, could not in the least degree be compared to Mary Besmond. In fact, however, Henry had seen so very little of Mary the last two months, and had been so much engrossed in the idea of making himself worthy of her, that it was not so difficult a matter as might be supposed to forget her; and he soon discovered that his duties and his occupations were more to him than his home.

At Grey Cottage affairs were going on very smoothly. Mr. Travers answered Mrs. Danesfield's letter in person, and soon he and Agnes were able to laugh at Mrs. Falker's mischief; and she never regretted it, as it enabled her to gain such an insight into her own heart; and when the victory was gained, she gave the first place in it to her God, from that time forward,—the second only to Mr. Tra-

vers, and their affection never had a cloud on it.

Mrs. Derry was in her element with all these weddings. She ran about from shop to shop with Agnes and Mary. The Mounthills consented to have their wedding also at Ryville, which gave Mrs. Derry an opportunity of discussing, and arranging, and aiding in Rosa's *trousseau* also.

Mr. Sandford urged that the three marriages should take place on the same day, and that the breakfast should be given at his house,—a proposition that met entire satisfaction.

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The evening before the great day, Mrs. Danesfield and Agnes were sitting alone.

"It is a fitting opportunity, my darling child, to tell you all about the mysterious link between Julian and myself." Taking a ribbon from her neck, which she always wore, she gave the key suspended to it to Agnes, and said, "Bring me the letter that is in that

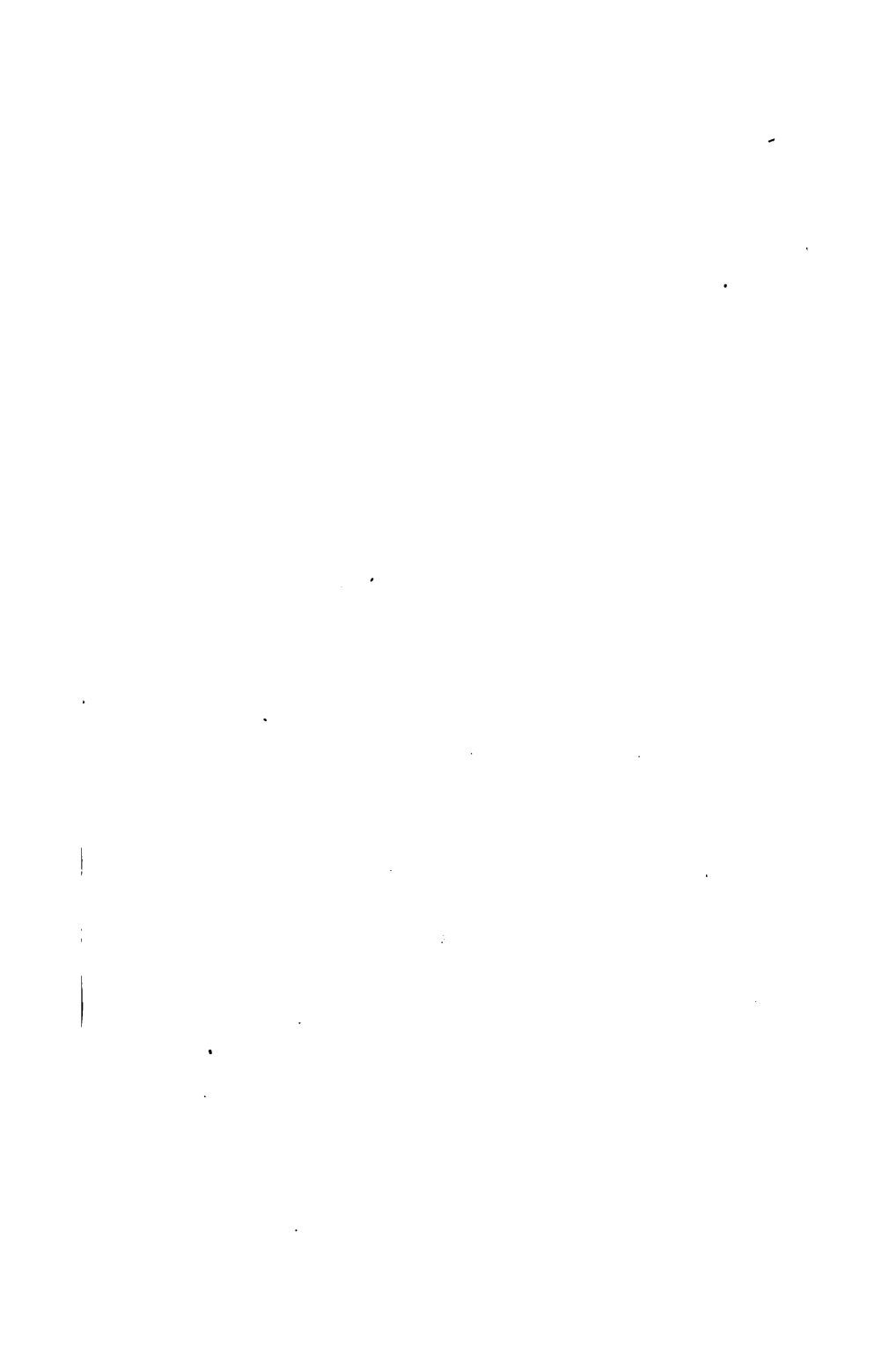
rosewood box, my love; and I will read it to you."

But before Agnes re-crossed the room, the tide of reminiscences had been too strong for her mother,—she had fainted. Agnes never mentioned the subject to her again.









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